







# **THE AWAKENED**

*Book One*

# EAST

COMPUTRIZED

A Report  
by Soviet Journalists  
on the Visit  
of N. S. KHRUSHCHOV  
to India, Burma, Indonesia,  
and Afghanistan



TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

**Contributors:**

A. AJUBEI	K. PEREVOSHCHIKOV
B. BURKOV	P. SATYUKOV
Y. VORONOV	M. STURUA
Y. ZHUKOV	O. TROYANOVSKY
L. ILYICHOV	Y. TRUSHIN
B. LEBEDEV	M. KHARLAMOV
V. MAYEVSKY	O. CHECHOTKINA
F. OREKHOV	E. SHEVELYOVA
N. PASTUKHOV	



**TO THE READER**

The Foreign Languages Publishing House would be glad to have your opinion of the translation and the design of this book.

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## TO THE READER

Forewords are often written by literary critics or historians. We have decided to write this one ourselves. And not so much a foreword, in fact, as a brief message to readers of this report on Premier Nikita Khrushchov's memorable Asian tour in 1960, during which he was accompanied by a large group of Soviet journalists.

On several occasions Khrushchov has called Soviet journalists his sputniks, in the sense of companions, in his travels abroad. Now we invite the reader, too, to become a sputnik, as it were, of the head of the Soviet Government on his historic tour of India, Burma, Indonesia and Afghanistan, a tour men of goodwill named a mission of peace and friendship among nations.

No matter how big a book we wrote we would never be able to give a full picture of our impressions or of the thoughts and feelings expressed by the millions who saw or met the head of the Soviet Government during the tour. We have endeavoured to describe the main and most stirring episodes, the highlights we recorded in our notebooks on the spot.

The South-East Asian mission of peace and friendship lasted twenty-four days, from February 10 to March 4, 1960. Premier Khrushchov's airliner covered a distance of



some 24,000 kilometres. Beneath its wings there spread the stern and majestic panorama of the Hindu Kush, in creating which Nature seemed to be boasting to man, "Just look at what I can do!" Today man, Nature's child, soars above the highest mountains with ease. Farther came the sun-baked, yellowish-red soil of India, the turquoise expanses of the Indian Ocean and, practically merging with them and also stretching to the horizon, the vast green sea of the Indonesian jungles, with the squares of the rice paddies sparkling in the sun like huge windowpanes. There were cities and tiny villages, palaces, huts and temples, the winding ribbons of mountain roads and arrow-straight modern highways. And above it all, the scorching tropical sun.

This is not a novel or a story about the wonders and exotic features of the East but a report by journalists about Khrushchov's meetings and talks with people of different political views, religious convictions, incomes and educational and social status. It is a story about the spirit of the times in which many millions of people have awakened to a new life. We feel that the title *The Awakened East* accurately reflects the present situation, namely, the economic, political and social awakening of the peoples of the East\*.

What does "spirit of the times" mean? How can one picture it? It encompasses the language of statistics and economic surveys, sharp social clashes, domestic and international political developments. A struggle is going on, a struggle between parties, a struggle between classes, a struggle waged by a variety of methods and means.

At home, in one's accustomed environment, one is apt to lose sight of the fact that the world presents many different faces, that in this 20th century of ours there are still

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\* For the reader's convenience we have divided the book into two volumes. Volume I covers Premier Khrushchov's visit to India and Burma, while Volume II describes his tour of Indonesia and Afghanistan.—Authors' note.

no few places on our planet where features of the past centuries, with all their harshness and oppression of man, and the grim heritage of colonialism, are clearly in evidence.

We hasten to make the reservation that the people in those places and countries are not to blame if the clock of history moved more slowly there during recent centuries than in the Western countries whose pious representatives so plume themselves on their level of civilisation. Colonialism, that satanic invention of the "civilised" for plundering the "backward", is to blame. The Western marauders invaded the East with sword and cross, and they oppressed, devastated and strangled the people.

Time, of course, is a universal concept. But those who through the lips of their brigand-bard Kipling ironically declared, "East is East, and West is West", would do well to remember that it was they who shackled the peoples of the East in the massive chains that checked their progress.

We live in an age when the peoples of the East are throwing off the hateful chains of colonialism and, like Prometheus unbound, are squaring their powerful shoulders. The spirit of the times in those countries can be defined briefly:

*Freedom!* So that the peoples themselves become master of their countries and their destinies, and throw off the yoke of imperialism and colonialism for ever!

*Happiness!* So that the peoples themselves enjoy the fruits of their labour and all the benefits of civilisation!

*Peace!* So as to work and sleep at night in a tranquil state of mind, so as to be confident of the morrow and the future of one's children!

*Freedom, happiness, peace!* That was the spirit of the times that was brought home to us as we accompanied the head of the Soviet Government on his extensive travels from country to country, city to city and town to town.

The emancipation of peoples whom the colonialists held



back from the highroad of human progress for centuries, and the rebirth of these peoples to an independent life are a great sign of our times. In only the first fifteen years after the war about 1,500 million people—half the population of the globe—threw off the chains of colonial oppression.

Dozens of new national states have emerged from the ruins of old colonial empires.

“A new period has opened in man’s history, a period in which the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America have joined the peoples of Europe and North America in shaping the future of all the world,” Premier Khrushchov declared in his speech at the Fifteenth General Assembly of the United Nations on September 23, 1960. “There can be no realistic foreign policy, no policy keeping pace with the demands of our time and responding to the peaceable aspirations of the peoples, unless this indisputable fact is acknowledged.”

This book will tell the reader about people of the Asian countries, about their struggle, their work, their thirst for social justice, freedom, peace and friendship among nations. As Khrushchov has reiterated, freedom, happiness and peace will never come as a gift from the colonialists; they cannot be gained by entreaty, they have to be fought for persistently.

Further, this book will show how people are beginning to realise that they cannot win happiness by acting singly, that only popular unity and friendship among nations can assure victory. People in the East have not forgotten, nor will they ever forget, all the sorrow and misfortune brought down on them by the colonialists’ predatory watchword of “divide and rule!”

The colonial domination of India and Burma by Britain, of Indonesia by the Netherlands, of Viet-Nam by France, of the Congo by Belgium, and of the Philippines by the United States lasted for decades or centuries, and there are some who would like it to last for ever. The imperialist

colonialists want the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to remain in the grip of hunger and poverty, as objects of ruthless plunder by the monopolies. In the 20th century, when a third of mankind is building a new life under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, in this age of electronics and the atom, an age of luxurious motor-cars and powerful tractors, the colonialists want the Egyptian fellahs to till the cotton fields the same way their forbears did 2,000 years ago; in this age when beautiful cities with every comfort and convenience are arising they want hundreds of millions in the Asian countries to live in wretched hovels.

But that will never be! Like a river in flood sweeping away all the rubbish and filth in its path, the great movement and courageous struggle of the oppressed peoples will tear asunder the chains of slavery.

"The entire course of historical development now poses the issue of the complete and final abolition of the colonial system in all its forms and manifestations. And this must come about immediately and unconditionally and not at some later date!"

Those stirring words come from the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples, submitted by the Soviet Union to the Fifteenth U.N. General Assembly. The Declaration, with its lofty principles and great freedom-loving spirit, has met with the ardent approval and full support of all honest people. They rightly call it a Manifesto of the struggle of the colonies and their peoples for freedom and independence, social justice and the triumph of Truth on earth.

In their great battle for freedom and happiness the peoples of the East have learned from experience to distinguish real friends from enemies posing as friends. They see how the neo-colonialists are trying to harness them by hook or by crook, they realise that the transoceanic monopolies are holding out the hand of deceptive dollar "aid".



in an attempt to put them into chains again, this time the chains of collective colonialism.

This book will give the reader an idea of the affection, admiration and hope with which the working folk in Asian countries look towards the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, which are rapidly advancing toward their radiant future, to communist society.

Some of the authors of this book accompanied Khrushchov on his Asian tour in 1955 and on his visit to the People's Republic of China. They are therefore in a position to make comparisons. What great progress the countries of the East, above all People's China, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the Mongolian People's Republic, have made in these years in their work of building a new society!

How the face of the land in many Eastern countries has changed, how their productive forces have expanded, and, last but most important, how the people themselves have changed, with what greater breadth and purposefulness do they now look ahead into their future!

We do not, of course, regard the present-day development of the Asian countries Khrushchov visited as a broad, straight, smooth road. No, it is not a case of reclining in the shade of a palm tree and waiting for prosperity to fall like manna from heaven. Those countries have many problems; a grim struggle is going on there, and we hope that we have succeeded in conveying an idea of it to the reader.

We refer not only to the bitter debates and clashes between parties and classes. Machine-guns still chatter in the beautiful, sun-flooded groves of some Eastern countries, and courageous fighters for the people's happiness, for great and just ideas, are shedding their blood. Two-legged jackals continue to howl their malicious slander. They often disguise themselves as "friends of the people" but their hearts are cold and their thoughts are full of hatred and poisonous intrigue.

Are there many of them? It is not easy to say because

they hide their real countenance behind a mask of hypocrisy. The peoples of the East know about them, know about their perfidious schemes and far-reaching machinations. Moreover, the peoples know not only the pawns but also the kings and their transatlantic addresses.

In a class society vigilance is by no means an abstract concept. Carelessness could lead to loss of the newly-gained freedom. Popular vigilance and unity, consistency and clarity of purpose in the struggle are a guarantee of victory, a guarantee of consolidation of political and economic independence, a guarantee of progress. We met people who, like Gorky's Danko, were ready to tear the heart out of their breast as a torch to light up the way through morass and jungle to the bright goal, to the cherished shores, to a life worthy of man.

What we have striven to emphasise is that although political independence has been proclaimed in many Eastern countries the struggle for independence continues. Running up the national flag over Parliament and proclaiming political independence is not, after all, the only thing that counts. In the same way as a firm foundation makes for a sturdy building, the stronger a country's economic base, the stronger and more durable its political independence.

When you try to visualise the world in all its diversity you get a panorama of amazing contrasts. In the eyes of many, Western Europe and America—or what is called the West—means the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building, colossal suspension bridges and tunnels under the sea. The technical wonders of the West draw crowds of sight-seers.

In Asia, the tourist attractions, until recently, were of a different order—the Taj Mahal, the Shwedagon, the Borobudur. These creations are indeed worth seeing and admiring. They testify that the men who in times long gone by hewed gigantic figures of gods out of marble and granite, and built the splendid palaces, temples and mausoleums strove to understand and transform the world about them.



But the time will come—and come it will without fail—when tourists will visit Asian countries not only to look at the monuments of antiquity but also to admire the modern miracles of the East—giant irrigation systems, plants like the one at Bhilai, and cities cleaner and more convenient than Amsterdam!

Yes, such a time will come!

After all, there was a time when people came to Russia to look at the innumerable churches of Moscow, to buy a balalaika or a Tula samovar. Today the Russian words *sputnik*, *lunik*, *atomokhod*, *kosmichesky korabl* and *semiletka* are understood in all countries of the world!

When Khrushchov visited India, the bourgeois press said the reason he was given such a good welcome was because he knew how to make the *namaste* (the Indian greeting, consisting of pressing the palms of the hands together and holding them close to the chest). But learning the *namaste* is simple. Any distinguished visitor from the West could make the *namaste* without previous training. And they do. But their greeting fails to call forth sincere and friendly feelings on the part of the people.

Is it really a matter of the *namaste*? No, you have to look deeper. The people gave Khrushchov that hearty, stirring, sincere welcome as the leader of a great socialist country whose example is particularly valued and appreciated by newly-independent nations. They welcomed the head of the Soviet Government as a tireless champion of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, a champion of lasting peace and friendship among nations. That is why the people everywhere responded to his *namaste* with their heartfelt, fraternal, "Welcome, dear Soviet friends!"

To sum up, this book will take you on an extensive and memorable tour of India, Burma, Indonesia and Afghanistan, the peoples of which so heartily greeted Premier Khrushchov, a tour of countries of the new, awakened East.

# *IN INDIA*





## ALONG A ROAD OF FRIENDSHIP

### ALWAYS TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE

Are you a Muscovite, dear reader? A factory worker, school-teacher or pensioner? A doctor, college student or engineer? Or perhaps not a Muscovite but a resident of Leningrad or Kiev, Vladivostok, Baku or Tashkent, Riga or Alma Ata?

No matter who you are or where you live, we feel sure you can picture Moscow's Vnukovo Airport, the starting point of great missions of peace and friendship.

That was not the first time Premier Khrushchov set out on a distant journey from this aerial gateway to Moscow. He took off from Vnukovo for Washington on September 15, 1959, and only thirteen days later for Peking. He started out on his Asian tour from there on February 10, 1960.

Even if you are not a citizen of Moscow, dear reader, or a son of Peking, Prague or Warsaw, but, say, an auto worker of Detroit, a Marseilles docker or a resident of London, Rome or Cairo, we believe you too can picture that brisk winter morning at Vnukovo Airport, and the wing of the plane above the fir forest silvered with snow. We know you can because people everywhere follow Khrushchov's trips.

Soviet flags fluttered in the breeze. In keeping with what has now become tradition, many thousands had gathered



round Premier Khrushchov to see him off. There, side by side, stood workers from factories and construction sites, office employees, scientists, writers, college students and school children, Party and Government leaders, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Ministers, representatives of the Soviet Army, foreign diplomats, among them the heads of the Indonesian, Indian, Burmese and Afghanistan embassies and members of their staffs, and a veritable army of Soviet and foreign pressmen, photographers and news-reel cameramen.

The Russian frost is like fire, they say. The sparkling Russian winter and the fervent hearts of Soviet men and women saw Premier Khrushchov off.

"A happy voyage, Nikita Sergeyevich!" the crowd shouted as the plane started down the runway. "Good luck!" "A happy voyage!"

The whole country joined in giving the head of the Soviet Government a hearty send-off. It flooded him with best wishes—over the radio, in the newspapers, and in letters and telegrams.

From the lines of these letters there rises a composite picture of the man of our time—patriot and builder. Some of the letters sound rather dry, for the people who wrote them saw their main object in giving an accurate account of their work. Take, for instance, the letter in which V. Bogdanov, section chief in a shop of the Urals Heavy Engineering Works, says:

"The staff of our mill is working hard on an order it considers an honour to fill, an order from our Indian friends for rolling mill and blast furnace plant for the Bhilai Steel Works. . . .

"I spent some time at Bhilai last year. We Urals men were part of a group of Soviet workers who erected and adjusted equipment. I, for instance, headed a crew erecting machine-tools in the roller turning shop. Indian workers and engineers worked shoulder to shoulder with us.

"The joint work tempered and strengthened our friendship, friendship cemented by our common desire for peace and co-operation. The Indian workers understood us perfectly and were eager to learn our methods of work. The job went ahead fast. Every month we exceeded the schedule of installation operations by 15 to 20 per cent.

"We parted true friends. When we left, the Indian workers said to me, 'Pass on our heartfelt greetings to the Soviet people for their fraternal help'."

The Urals worker ended his letter with the following words: "Your visit to India, Comrade Khrushchov, will be a visit by a big and loyal friend of the Indian people. We wish you success, dear Nikita Sergeyevich, in your noble mission of peace and friendship among nations."

Some of the letters go on and on; their authors were clearly carried away by their eagerness to tell about what they had seen and experienced.

Hero of Socialist Labour Abdullah Artykov, Chairman of one of the collective farms in Yangi Yul District of the Uzbek Republic, had recently returned from a trip to India. How could he keep from putting down his feelings on paper? "Everywhere we went," he wrote, "we Soviet people were given an exceptionally cordial reception. People everywhere told us how impatiently they in India were looking forward to the visit of Nikita Khrushchov, the head of the Soviet Government; we saw that the Indian people ardently love and respect you, and are profoundly grateful for the enormous contribution you have made to promoting friendship among nations, to preserving peace on earth. We are confident that your visit to Indonesia and also to India, Burma and Afghanistan will lead to still closer friendship with the peoples of those countries and will serve as a reliable foundation for building a durable peace on earth."

Yekaterina Artamonova, who lives in the village of Mikhailovka in Kirovograd Region, the Ukraine, also wrote a letter to Khrushchov.



"Dear Nikita Sergeyevich," she said. "When we learned that you were going to tour Asia we joyfully celebrated the news; it was a big holiday for us.

"The peoples of Asia and Africa, like all the others, want to live in peace and friendship with all nations. We never want to see the horrors of war again. Although I did not experience them myself, my mother did, and so did all the people of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

"The Soviet people will rally still more closely round their beloved Communist Party and Soviet Government. From the bottom of their hearts the Ukrainian people say: 'A happy journey, Nikita Sergeyevich, envoy of peace and friendship!'"

In a letter to Premier Khrushchov, S. Itin, a Muscovite, wrote:

"I am a Soviet school-teacher, and I have always taught my students to love their country and hate war. When the war broke out we went off to the front, and many are no longer among the living. Many students never came back; there is probably not a school that has not hung up portraits and honour rolls of its former students who gave their lives in the Great Patriotic War.

"We do not want war. We want to see, in our schools, portraits of students who brought glory to their country by great discoveries, inventions or works of art.

"The span of human life should be prolonged instead of shortened! I wish you every success in your noble work, dear Nikita Sergeyevich. Allow me to give you a warm handshake and thank you from the bottom of my heart for being the first statesman of our time to stop using the language of diplomacy and speak for all the world to hear in the language of human beings, the language of the heart and conscience of the peoples."

Thousands of people write to Premier Khrushchov, addressing him as their best friend, as a man who knows

how to speak out in the name of the conscience of all the peoples.

The sleek IL-18 airliner set a southerly course. Under its wings passed towns and villages, factories and mines, collective farms and schools—a land where millions were engaged in peaceful, constructive work, thinking about their future, and, most important of all, about peace on earth. Theirs were the plain, and at times grim, thoughts, that occupy Premier Khrushchov, too.

We could not help recalling the ancient myth about Antaeus, who was strong and invincible as long as he touched the earth, his mother. Doesn't the Communist Party draw its strength and invincibility from its constant contact with the people? Doesn't the power of each of Khrushchov's speeches derive from the fact that he expresses the thoughts and aspirations not only of Soviet people but of millions of people of goodwill in all countries? Doesn't the strength of each and every Soviet citizen lie in the fact that behind him stand hundreds of millions of brothers?

The plane made its first stop in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan. Khrushchov's arrival coincided with a noteworthy event, the opening of the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. Thousands of people came to the airfield to welcome the dear guest, among them Congress delegates, industrial and office workers, and students. Khrushchov found himself in the thick of the people. He exchanged warm greetings with the top Party and Government officials of Uzbekistan. Catching sight of the celebrated cotton-growers K. Tursunkulov, Thrice Hero of Socialist Labour, and Kim Pen Khva and S. Urunkhojayev, Twice Heroes of Socialist Labour, in the welcoming crowd, he came up to them and embraced them.

Khrushchov addressed the people assembled in front of the airport building. After conveying his hearty greetings



to them he spoke of Uzbekistan's conspicuous achievements in the first year of the Seven-Year Plan and wished the Uzbek people still greater successes in developing industry and agriculture, notably cotton production. As First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and head of the Soviet Government he expressed his confidence that the Communists, Young Communist League members and the entire Uzbek people would acquit themselves with honour in carrying out the tasks set by the Twenty-First Party Congress and translate the Seven-Year Plan assignments into reality.

The crowd responded with stormy applause.

From the airfield Khrushchov and the group accompanying him on his tour drove to the city, which was festively decorated with red flags and streamers hailing the beloved Communist Party and Soviet Government, hailing the great Soviet Union. The open car in which Khrushchov sat with Rashidov, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, moved between endless rows of people. Cheers rang out from all sides.

Taking advantage, as he does, of every opportunity to meet people, talk with them and learn their thoughts and aspirations, Khrushchov attended that evening's sitting of the Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. The Congress delegates greeted his appearance in the huge resplendent auditorium of the Tashkent opera house with a storm of applause.

The next day, February 11, Khrushchov continued on his way to India.

The winding ribbons of the frontier rivers, and with them the last inch of Soviet soil, remained somewhere far below. Ahead lay the People's Republic of China.

Khrushchov sent a warm message of greetings to Peking, addressed to Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Liu Shao-

chi, Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic, Chu Teh, Chairman of the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress, and Chou En-lai, Premier of the State Council. It said:

"As I fly over the territory of the People's Republic of China I send ardent, fraternal greetings to you, dear comrades, and to the entire Chinese people.

"With all my heart I wish you and the great Chinese people new and still greater success in building socialism.

"Long live Soviet-Chinese friendship!"

### THROUGH THE CENTURIES

We still had another hour in the air before reaching Delhi. Plenty of time for a glance at past centuries.

The contours of antiquity are now indistinct: the commerce between the peoples of Central Asia and India, dating back more than 2,000 years, the common epic poems and legends, the breath of folk art, the first daring voyages—things that create a kinship in the feelings, thoughts and languages of peoples.

Emperor Babur, founder of the Great Mogul dynasty of India, sent a merchant named Husein to Russia. This is what V. Tatishchev, the Russian historian, says about Husein's mission:

"The merchant Hodja Husein came from India to Grand Duke Vasily Ivanovich of All Russia, with a scroll from Babur Pasha, Lord of India. Babur Pasha wrote that he desired friendship and brotherhood with the great sovereign Vasily, and that men should pass freely and in safety between the two countries; and the Grand Duke sent Hodja Husein back to Babur Pasha with a scroll saying that he too desired that people should travel between them, but about brotherhood he said nothing, for he knew not whether Babur was sovereign of India or an official."



Under Babur's successors India established broad commercial contacts with other countries. Indian merchants came to Russia, too. In the 16th century Russian merchants traded also with the distant Indian principality of Bhutan on the Tibetan border.

Iranian, Armenian, Turkish and Central Asian merchants brought fabrics, precious stones, pepper, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg from India to Russia. Russians exchanged goods with Indians in the major trading centres of those times, Isfahan, Tabriz, Hormuz, Samarkand, Bukhara and Kazvin.

The first intrepid travellers. . . .

It was their inquisitive minds and persistence that made the commercial and cultural contacts possible. Every Soviet schoolboy knows the name of Afanasy Nikitin. A film about the fearless 15th-century Russian merchant has been made jointly by Soviet and Indian cinematographers.

Recalling the Afanasy Nikitin story in our airliner en route to India was quite different, incidentally, from following his travels on the screen. Now each frame of the film and every line we had read about Afanasy Nikitin came alive.

Afanasy Nikitin set out on his distant journey together with a mission from the Shirvanshah. Bandits fell on their caravan in the lower reaches of the Volga, from where the merchant continued on his way to India alone and penniless. He finally reached the southern coast of the Caspian, spent several months crossing Iran on foot, and then proceeded by sea to India from a port on the Persian Gulf.

Today, Afanasy Nikitin's description of India reads like a fairy-tale.

"There is a land named India, where the people walk about unclothed: their heads are uncovered, their breasts are bare, their hair is woven into a single braid . . . and they have many children. All the men and women are black. Everywhere I went crowds followed me, amazed at the sight of a white man. A prince wears a cloth on his head



and another round his hips; a nobleman walks with a cloth on his shoulder and another round his hips; a princess wears a cloth wrapped round her shoulders and another round her hips. The servants of the princes and nobles wear cloth round their hips and carry a sword and shield; others have spears, or knives, or sabres, or bows and arrows....”

Several centuries later, the work of the Russian enlightener Gerasim Lebedev was a milepost in Russian-Indian friendship.

Gerasim Lebedev was the pioneer in popularising the gems of European art and letters in India. With the help of a Bengali friend, Golack Nath Das, he founded the first European-type theatre in Calcutta, an enterprise that involved tremendous effort. The first performance of Jodrell's play *The Disguise*, translated into Bengali, was shown to a capacity audience. Lebedev had shifted the action of the play from Europe to Calcutta and Lucknow, given the characters Bengali names and included Bengali folk songs. The play was received enthusiastically. Krishna Dutt, a contemporary Bengali author, noted that that day would go down in the history of Indian culture as a symbol of friendship between two great peoples of the world.

Lebedev's work of enlightenment ran up against opposition from the colonialists. They started hounding him, brought him to financial ruin and in the end forced him to leave India. On his return home Lebedev published two books, the first scholarly works in Russian about India. One was a Hindi grammar and the other a description of India's geography, economy, religion and the life of the people. Countering the British colonialists' claim that the Indian people were "savages", Lebedev wrote: "The Indians bear not the slightest resemblance to savages and have more right to call such those who treat them more brutally than the cruellest and most blood-thirsty beasts."

The foreign enslavers tried to fence in that great country of an ancient and original culture and inhabited by a gifted,

industrious people. They erected the barrier of colonialism in the way of friendship between the peoples. Colonialism strangled the Indian people and plundered their material and spiritual resources. But in those dark times the finest sons of Russia, who were concerned with the fate of their own country, languishing under tsarism, took an interest in India too. They shared the Indian people's sorrow and wrath.

Russian revolutionary democrats raised their voice in defence of the Indian people. In his article "Looking at the East Indies, Past and Present," Nikolai Dobrolyubov spoke about the justice of the Indian people's fight for emancipation. He wrote the article on the advice of Nikolai Chernyshevsky, who closely followed the situation in India and had written a number of articles about it, including an analysis of agrarian relations. Herzen, Ogaryov and Belinsky also warmly supported the Indian people in their struggle against the British colonialists.

The attitude of Russia's revolutionary democrats towards India was expressed more forcefully than ever during the popular uprising of 1857-1859. "It would be hard to find, in the political world of today, an issue more vital, more interesting and more important than the Indian question," the Russian magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* said in November 1857. "Everybody looks forward to news from India with the greatest impatience; what readers look for first of all in the newspaper columns are the magic words 'India', 'Letter from India', 'Despatch from Calcutta'."

The uprising, wrote Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, was an explosion of dissatisfaction. As they put it, the Indians rose up because "there is a limit to human patience". The Russian revolutionary democrats refuted the allegations in the British press that the uprising was a mutiny by a handful of people, a mutiny of barbarism against civilisation. The revolutionary democrats regarded the uprising as the dawn of India's emancipation.

When widespread famine broke out in India in 1896 a re-



lief fund was organised in Russia. Intellectuals and wealthy people were by no means the only ones who donated to it. A friend of ours whose hobby is browsing through old newspapers supplied us with a list of contributors that was published in the *Sankt-Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* of April 5, 1897. The list speaks for itself. Here it is: "From the peasants of Polyustrovo Volost, Petersburg Uyezd, 5 rubles; from the inhabitants of the settlement of Kolpino and a camp in Tsarskoye Selo Uyezd, 20 rubles 62 kopeks; from the peasants of Gdov Uyezd, 43 rubles."

Not millions but hard-earned kopeks were what peasants of tsarist Russia donated to help the Indian famine victims. But on the scales of friendship those kopeks, which grew into rubles, outweighed millions.

India, her place and role in world history, the life and struggles of the Indian people, and the rapacious substance of colonialism are extensively treated in the writings of Lenin. Time and again the Indian people and the peoples of other newly-independent countries in the formerly oppressed continents of Asia and Africa gratefully recall what Lenin taught them and what he did for their emancipation.

As far back as at the birth of India's working-class movement Lenin foresaw the inevitable collapse of the colonial order following the victory of the heroic liberation struggle of the Indian people. In an article published in the newspaper *Proletary* in 1908 and entitled "Inflammable Material in World Politics", Lenin said: "The class-conscious European worker already has comrades in Asia, and their number will grow by leaps and bounds."

"Comrades" is what Lenin called the plain people of India. Only a real friend could have said that.

## MOUNTAINS AND MAN

The spurs of the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas, the highest mountains in the world, now lay beneath the wings of our plane.



In everyday life we often compare things with mountains. We speak of waves "running mountain high" and we call a very tall and stout person "a mountain of flesh". But is there anything to compare mountains with? Not really, because they are nature's grandest creations. Looking out of the plane window we saw snow-covered peaks soaring above the clouds, with, far below, the furrows of deep gorges and the rare patches of valleys.

If mountains could speak, how many a thrilling story we would hear about happenings in the millions of years since our planet was born, about riches concealed deep underground, about glaciers that destroyed vast regions, about the fearless men who scaled the highest summits, and much more.

Can anything rival the greatness of the Himalayas? Only man's genius.

It was man's genius that raised our tremendous metal bird higher than the highest mountains, shattered the eternal stillness of the Himalayas and laid a giant air bridge across them to link up countries. Our fast-winged airliner was indeed a wondrous thing. Cruising at an altitude of 9,000 metres, we felt as though we were sitting at our desk at home. How could we help thinking about the fine Soviet people who had built such a machine, and how could we help sending them our heartfelt thanks!

Three short decades ago, at the start of the First Five-Year Plan, the U.S.S.R. invited American and European specialists to help build new factories in order to speed our progress. They came, and among them there were all kinds: fine, honest men eager to help, and others interested only in making money as fast as they could. The Soviet people were learning in those days—learning from the foreigners, learning from their own experience, from overcoming difficulties. Gradually the pupils overtook the teachers, breaking down many a shibboleth about the possibilities of science and technology.

An army of scientists, engineers, designers, technicians

and skilled workers has grown up in the Soviet Union since then. They have mastered the best achievements of Russian and foreign science and technology over the centuries, and, utilising the advantages provided by the socialist system, they are accomplishing miracles. Thousands of modern factories, the world's largest hydroelectric power stations, vast storage lakes and irrigation canals, the fastest aircraft in the world, atomic power stations, a nuclear-powered ice-breaker, the sputniks, space rockets and spaceships—all that and much more has been created by the Soviet people.

As we sped on our way above the mountains, Khrushchov read reports and prepared his address to the Indian Parliament. He recalled a letter he had received, just before starting out, from V. Shulgin, an old Russian monarchist, and asked someone to read it out loud. Shulgin wrote that he still opposed the communist ideology but now, after Khrushchov's visit to the United States, he wanted to join in the fight for peace and make an appeal along those lines to the Russian whiteguard émigrés.

"In my youth I used to read his speeches, and also the speeches of Markov the Second and Purishkevich," Khrushchov said. "They were rabid monarchists. Who would ever have thought that in our time even a man like Shulgin would declare his solidarity with us in the battle for peace?"

For that matter, could V. Shulgin himself—who had so fervently persuaded the readers of his book *Days* that only a monarchy could save Russia—ever have imagined that some forty odd years later he would write a letter to the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, having seen that implementation of the proposals of a convinced Communist could save the world from war?

How could that have happened?



Let us go back for a moment to 1919, the third year of the Soviet Republic, when Robert Wilton, a *New York Times* correspondent with the reputation of an "expert on Russian affairs", published a book called *Russia's Agony*, in which he said: "Bolshevism is a destructive, not a constructive, agency. . . . Thus, from an economic point of view the continuance of the present regime is an impossibility. From a political standpoint it is equally absurd."

Today, some four decades later, we have before us a report submitted to the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress by another "expert on Russian affairs", Harry Schwartz, Mr. Wilton's spiritual successor on the staff of the *New York Times*. Mr. Schwartz says: "One can only look forward with foreboding to the situation which will develop as Soviet production increases and the economic gap between us and the Soviet Union diminishes, as diminish it will. Moreover, in this world where abysmal poverty is still the lot of most of the world's people, the example of superior Soviet speed in raising production is exercising and, if continued, will exercise the greatest attraction upon the masses and leaders of South America, Asia and Africa where most of the world's people and most of the world's poverty are concentrated."

The seers who predicted "Russia's agony" and the failure of the Soviet five-year plans, who assured the world that the Russian proletarians were incapable of catching up with the West, who boasted of how far ahead they had moved, now find themselves on the rubbish heap of history. Dazed, frightened by its own blindness, the bourgeois West is groping for an explanation of what is taking place.

Meanwhile the Soviet Union has continued its exploration of space, launching a rocket that delivered a pennant to the moon and sending a spaceship to take pictures of the other side of the moon.

Those great achievements of Soviet science and technology amazed the world. Speaking in the British House of



Commons, Mr. Harold Wilson, prominent member of the Labour Party, noted with bitter irony:

"The Soviets have photographed the reverse side of the moon. The summit of Western competitive achievement is an aspiration to photograph the reverse side of Miss Jayne Mansfield."

Mr. Wilson's definition of the "summit of Western competitive achievement" is not altogether accurate, however. Some Western politicians are working hard to counter the Soviet peaceful conquest of space with "achievement" of another kind, namely, use of the atmosphere and space for purely military purposes. They send up reconnaissance planes to photograph the territory of other countries and what are officially called "spy-in-the-sky" satellites. They are establishing air and atomic rocket bases at the approaches to the Soviet Union and aimed against it. From these bases, as was later shown by the Lockheed U-2 espionage flight into the air space of the Soviet Union, the United States is conducting systematic and provocative reconnaissance. The brazen sally of the aggressors on May 1, 1960, ended in a fiasco: the American brigand was shot down by a Soviet rocket. Two weeks later the Soviet Union launched a spaceship, blazing a trail for manned flight to the stars. Those two events clearly reflect the two curves in human history, one descending and the other ascending.

Sensing its doom, capitalism is using scientific achievements for military purposes primarily, in order to put off its collapse. Science and technology are more closely linked up with politics than ever before.

Socialism, confident of its morrow, is exploring space; it places the great achievements of science and technology at the service of the peoples, for the benefit of peace.

The Soviet sputniks, luniks and spaceships reflect not merely the economic, technical and scientific progress of socialism but its ideological strength. They are an embodiment of the Soviet policy of peace and friendship, its pol-

icy of peaceful coexistence. The Soviet sputniks and luniks revolutionised the thinking of millions who to one degree or another had been influenced by the slanderous "cold war" propaganda. They made totally meaningless the talk about a policy "from strength", a "policy of containment", a "policy of rolling back", and so on.

Here is what the well-known American sociologist Wright Mills has to say on the subject: "U.S. policy is now bankrupt. It has failed to hold back the increased influence of the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War." Elsewhere in his book *The Causes of World War Three* he declares: "The American *élite* is becoming aware that the political economy of communism may very well outcompete, in their own terms of production, the political economy of capitalism." He also says: "From the standpoint of mere survival, let alone progress toward a world of properly developing societies, there is now one and only one paramount goal and only one general means to it: coexistence."

The highest mountains in the world now lay behind us. Our Soviet airliner had carried us over them without any particular effort. For centuries, however, they had been a barrier between countries, although they could not prevent the birth of friendship with India. The main barrier had been not the mountains, of course, but imperialism, the domination of India by foreigners.

Recent developments have removed both those barriers. The Soviet Union and India have become good neighbours and close friends.

Now the capital of India, to which the head of the Soviet Government was making a visit, lay ahead of us.



# DELHI WELCOMES THE GUEST

## A SEA OF FLOWERS

We journalists often called to mind the old Eastern tale about a kingdom situated "nowhere and everywhere".

Correspondents from many countries live in the Indian capital, and they have a "kingdom" of their own, the Foreign Press Club. But as a matter of fact they hardly ever meet one another there. Their "kingdom" shifts from the large press conference hall in the Vigyan Bhavan, one of Delhi's most beautiful buildings, to the press gallery in the Lok Sabha, the House of the People of the Indian Parliament, or to the hotel where many of them live. They often gather at Palam Airport near Delhi to meet distinguished arrivals from abroad.

The corps of foreign newsmen is only a grain of sand compared to the people at large, but the newsmen's microworld possesses a noteworthy quality: it is a barometer of the current situation. Journalists laughingly say that you can gauge the international situation more or less accurately by how fast the news agency men go to the telegraph office after a press conference, say, or by how much heat they put into their negotiations with the telephone operators in Delhi, Moscow, London or Tokyo.

Palam Airport was the newsmen's "kingdom" on February 11, 1960.

Although there was still about an hour before Khrushchov's plane was due, everybody kept glancing at his watch. It reminded us, in a way, of a huge New Year's party—only it was not midnight but midday that the statesmen, diplomats, journalists, Indian Guardsmen, the band and the drivers, lined up in front of their gleaming, mirror-like cars, were waiting for.

Gaiety and excitement were in the air. The Indian capital was welcoming Nikita Khrushchov with wonderful spring weather and ardent popular enthusiasm.

The stand set up at the airport could be seen from afar, and it looked like a tower of flags and flowers.

On the flying field the photographers had at their disposal a mobile platform which, the airport management had assured them, would rise and turn when necessary, depending on the position of the sun, and give them the most favourable conditions for taking pictures. The platform, now clustered with photographers, was a living illustration of the saying, "the more the merrier".

We learned about the photographers' platform from a young airport worker. In our two-minute interview with him he told us that he was a clean-up man, that he had come to Delhi from the village not long ago to find work, and that he had helped to set up the "photo-platform", as he called it.

There was pride in the youth's voice as he told us about the platform. His native land, his capital, was about to welcome the head of the Soviet Government, and Indian equipment had been set up on the flying field.

At five minutes to twelve all eyes were fixed upwards. The sun was at its zenith in the brilliant sky. The day was at its height. How many events it was still to see!

The drone of the plane's engines called forth a thunder of applause. Then a silvery streak came down out of the blue heights. The huge Soviet airliner passed smoothly



over the airfield accompanied by an escort of fighter planes in a flawless V formation.

Staff members of the Soviet Embassy in Delhi, Soviet men and women employed in India, Soviet correspondents, how close your native land was at that moment! You forgot about Delhi's days of exhausting heat, when the city was like a gigantic oven; you felt as though there had never been any homesickness for Moscow with its merry winter frosts; or longing for families and friends back home, for the stars atop the Kremlin spires....

"We greet you, Premier Khrushchov!" the airport, the streets of Delhi and the entire vast country exclaimed in many languages.

Telegraph cables the world over carried details of the welcome given the head of the Soviet Government at Palam Airport:

"The National Anthems of the Soviet Union and India were played...."

"The head of the Soviet Government reviewed the guard of honour...."

"President Rajendra Prasad and Premier Khrushchov exchanged speeches...."

When Premier Khrushchov left India after his first visit four years earlier, Prime Minister Nehru delivered a farewell address at the same airfield in which he said: "We in India shall long remember your visit. You can take away with you from India anything you wish. But take one very precious thing, a message of love from the people of this country to the people of the Soviet Union.

"Come again! We look forward to seeing you!"

Addressing the citizens of India from the stand at the airport, Premier Khrushchov now said:

"Although the distance separating the Soviet Union and India remains the same, a force undeterred by distance is growing and strengthening from year to year. This force is the mutual desire of the Soviet and Indian peoples to establish complete understanding between the two coun-

tries, to consolidate and develop the friendship between our peoples. We can now say with great satisfaction that India and the Soviet Union are not simply neighbours. They have become good neighbours and great friends....

"We wholeheartedly support extension of personal contacts between statesmen of the Soviet Union and other countries above all because in our time these contacts have become an effective means of normalising the international situation and promoting understanding between states.

"We attach particular importance to the further strengthening and development of personal contacts between statesmen of the Soviet Union and the Republic of India," Premier Khrushchov continued. "The expansion of these contacts has already yielded fruitful results in terms of closer Soviet-Indian co-operation in the political, economic, scientific and cultural fields. Soviet-Indian co-operation in the international arena is an important factor in ensuring a durable world peace."

Further Premier Khrushchov reminded his listeners of the power of friendship and the significance of personal contacts between those invested with great responsibility for the destinies of countries and nations.

The power of friendship. . .

What were the recollections that arose in the mind of India's Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel, Sardar Swaran Singh, who had recently visited the Soviet Union, as he listened to Khrushchov's speech? Interviewed by our group of Soviet journalists, he said:

"When I was in the Soviet Union I did not feel that I was outside my own country." Mr. Swaran Singh spoke with great respect of the cultural level typical of all parts of the Soviet Union, of the diversified spiritual life of Soviet men and women, and of their enthusiastic work.

"At the factories I visited," he said, "I was struck by the earnest and devoted attitude of the workers towards



their job. I refer not only to the assignments the workers perform on their lathes and machines, and perform with skill and great efficiency; I refer to the fact that the workers, or at any rate the majority of them, are very well up on the long-range tasks and programmes of their factories. Devotion to the cause and clarity of purpose are characteristic of Soviet factory workers, men and women alike. The technological achievements have obviously played a big part in strengthening the Soviet people's confidence in the future, both their own and their country's. The citizens of the U.S.S.R. carry out their obligations with a sense of duty and with pride."

What thoughts and mental pictures did Khrushchov's speech arouse in Indira Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter and a well-known Indian public leader, who had accompanied her father on his visit to the Soviet Union? This is what she told us:

"When I was in the Soviet Union I was tremendously impressed by the work and achievements of the Soviet women. What they do amazes me and inspires me in my work. I constantly compared the road traversed by Soviet women with what has already been accomplished in India and what still lies ahead.... Great tasks face us in the spheres of economy, education and changing people's attitudes. A war would threaten all of India's further development. Every Indian woman wholeheartedly supports Mr. Khrushchov's proposal for a world without war because peace is a vital necessity for my country!"

In the welcoming crowd, Prem Das, a worker from Bhilai, attentively followed Khrushchov's speech. When we met him later in Bhilai he told us of his thoughts at that momentous hour, recalling a legend he had heard from his father.

"The secrets of making iron were known long, long ago," he began. "Our people smelted the ore in small furnaces and forged the iron into knives, axes and arrow-heads. One day a man rich in intelligence and knowledge came to our

country from the other side of the northern mountains. He watched us making iron, and he offered us his hands, his brain and his heart. He said: 'I will build you a great furnace and a forge beside it, so that in addition to making knives you will be able to cover your roofs with iron, build roads of iron, and bring water from village to village along iron pipes. But to build that furnace and forge three things are needed: peace on earth, firm friendship and good co-operation.' That was a legend current among the people. Legends do not die. They are like flowers in the spring: they blossom again and again. And now we say: the Soviet man has come from the other side of the northern mountains, a man of peace, friendship and co-operation. He helped India to build the wonderful Bhilai Plant. And when I hear Khrushchov's voice my joy knows no bounds! From the bottom of our hearts we thank him and greet our Russian brothers."

The telegraph cables spread the news throughout the world:

"The welcoming ceremony at Palam Airport is over. The distinguished Soviet guest and the President and Prime Minister take their seats in an open limousine and set out for the city."

Indian tri-colours and Soviet red flags fluttered in the breeze beside festive multicoloured streamers and garlands of flowers. There was a veritable sea of flowers!

There is a national greeting in India which anyone who has ever heard once will never forget. It instantaneously transforms hundreds of thousands of people into a powerful massed choir conducted by a volunteer cheer leader. We saw a cheer leader step forth and exclaim with fervour:

*"Hindi Rusi!"*

The short, sharp exclamation streaked out over the crowd like lightning, and the vast assembly responded with a thunderous:



"*Bhai bhai!*"

That means, "Indians and Russians are brothers!"

The crowd cheered:

"*Khrushchov zinda bâd!*" (Long live Khrushchov!)

"Long live Indo-Soviet friendship!"

"*Khrushchov—ochen khorosho!*" (Khrushchov—very good!) there rang out in Russian.

The cars moved along a fragrant carpet of flowers. The excited people chanted words of friendship, peace and brotherhood. Arches of coloured flags and ribbons decorated the streets.

"*Swagatam!*" "Welcome, Khrushchov!" declared streamers stretched along the streets.

The turbaned policemen with their long bamboo sticks had a hard time holding back the pressure of the human ocean. Hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets of the Indian capital. Flag-decorated camels on which peasants from distant villages had arrived in Delhi the day before towered importantly above the crowd at the sides of the streets. There were also lorries in which delegations of workers from distant factories and shops had come, and painstakingly decorated peasant carts and wagons. It was clear that people wanted to display their most valuable and beautiful possessions, to show them to the world, with its sun, wind and roadside dust! In the same way, all the best in people, often hidden deep in their hearts, was now generously opened up. People were not stinting or hiding their friendly feelings.

It looked as though most of Delhi's population of more than a million had come out into the streets. How many faces, how many different garments! The long jacket called the *camisa*; the *kurta*, or loose coloured shirt; women's *saris* of all shades and hues; the white *dhoti*, a strip of linen which men wrap round their hips and legs. There were fashionably dressed residents of Delhi and people in the simplest garb.

They clearly came from all walks of life, these people

who had poured out into the streets along which Premier Khrushchov drove from Palam Airport to the Presidential Palace.

### A HEART-TO-HEART TALK

Several of us stepped out of the car with the "Press" sign on the windshield and mingled with the happy, excited throngs.

"What stands out as the most interesting memory in your life?" we asked an old man dressed in white. An Indian journalist interpreted for us.

The old man slowly shook his head, a gesture which means "yes" in India. So there was something important he remembered. But first we learned that his name was Likh Ram, he was eighty, and he was a peasant from the village of Motibag not far from Delhi. He spoke in a weak, quavering voice, and his face was very thin and withered, as though dried out by the sun.

"Once upon a time the great waters of the Ganges and the Jumna were lost among the dense forests," the old man began.

Listening to Likh Ram's story, we had the feeling we were slowly moving along the time-worn steps of an ancient stairway into the depths of folk poetry. The gods, he said, following the counsel of the wise Krishna, decided to join the rivers and the seas. Ever since then, the Ganges and the Jumna have united in the north of India, while the waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet at Cape Comorin, the southernmost tip of India. . . .

Likh Ram spoke unhurriedly, perhaps because he was remembering the old legend as he went along, or perhaps because he was creating it anew. When he came to the end we could see that he wanted to wind up on a majestic note but could not find the right words. Running his eyes over the people gathered round him, he fell silent. By this time



news-reel cameramen, both Soviet and Indian, had come up and were filming the scene. Finally Likh Ram hit on the words to express his main idea:

"The people today are like a mighty river!" he exclaimed.

Folk legends about unity and ideas that strengthen ties between people are particularly prized in this huge country which the colonialists strove for hundreds of years to divide. Now we had just seen an old legend take on a new and broader meaning.

An ovation in honour of unity and friendship thundered out to greet Khrushchov as he stood in the open car beside Nehru.

In the centre of Delhi, where the crowds were thickest of all, where there was not a single vacant place either on the pavements, the roofs or at the wide-open windows, a thick cluster of red flags caught our eye. Cramped though they were, a group of youths and girls nevertheless managed to wave their flags in the air. We climbed out of the car again. Waving his red flag, one of the boys shouted to us:

"I greeted Khrushchov with this flag last time! I was a schoolboy then, and I've kept it all this time!"

Yes, the people were in an expansive mood. They were eager to speak for all to hear, at the top of their voice, about the things uppermost in their minds. We asked them questions, and they asked us questions.

"How do you account for the fact your country is so powerful?" a young woman asked.

We could have spent a whole day telling her about our splendid people, about our country's day-to-day life, every hour and every minute of which reflected the Soviet Union's strength and greatness. But we had time for only the briefest and simplest answer. One of our group pointed to the flag the woman was holding and tried to put it all into these three words:

"The red flag!"

The Russian revolutionaries of the 19th century, Lenin's followers; the Red Guards who captured the Winter Palace in 1917; the Civil War heroes and our comrades who gave their lives at Rzhev and Stalingrad, Moscow and Berlin, Prague and Belgrade; the members of the Communist Work Teams, who have red flags on their lathes—were they not all standing beside us on the soil of India at that moment! The breeze of the October Revolution and the great victories of the Soviet system helped to unfurl the national flag of India, and inspired the crimson flags that fluttered above the heads of the people in those thronged streets!

The *Indian Express* said: "Nikita Khrushchov's visit to India is in intent and in fact a mission of peace. He knows the Indian people and the people of India know him. The warm reception accorded him in Delhi will be all the more cordial because it will have behind it the enthusiasm of the people all over the country."

The enthusiasm of the people! Yes, that was what made the welcome given the head of the Soviet Government in Delhi a continuation, as it were, of the send-off at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport.

In an article about the visit one of the Delhi newspapers remarked: "If any outstanding foreign personality has won the hearts of the Indian people, it is Khrushchov, whose informality and love of the plain people have endeared him to Indians."

Friendly informality and love of the Indian people highlighted all of Premier Khrushchov's talks with India's leading statesmen during the official visits that day.

In the huge Presidential Palace, part of which had now been placed at the disposal of the distinguished Soviet guest and his party, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. had a conversation with President Rajendra Prasad of India. The palace, with its long marble corridors and gloomy chambers, was built for the British viceroy and is somewhat reminiscent of a museum. This



impression was heightened by the tall, handsome, turbaned guards in red uniform with embroidery, who stood at attention in front of the doors and in the corridors, holding halberds. Premier Khrushchov's conversation with President Prasad was a striking contrast to the museum-like appearance of the palace. They spoke about life, about vital problems that agitate the minds of millions.

"You know, I have a soft spot in my heart for agriculture," said Khrushchov. "After all, it's the source of people's life. Some countries solved the agricultural problem earlier than others, and it does not seem to be the main thing for them now, but even in those countries this problem has great importance."

"Agriculture is still a big problem for us Indians," Prasad replied. "We produce little foodstuffs so far. We hope, however, that our dependence on foreign countries in supplying the population with food will disappear when we improve our agriculture."

India's industrial development was the subject of lively discussion.

"With regard to industrialisation," said Prasad, "we are now concentrating our attention on increasing steel output and expanding the engineering industry. You are giving us great help in building up our steel industry. Not so long ago I attended the inauguration of the plant at Bhilai. It seems that now the plant is to be enlarged still more."

"I read your speech at the inauguration of the Bhilai Works," Khrushchov remarked. "We were flattered by your generous appraisal of our services in its construction."

"I hear that you are beginning to help us with two other important projects. I particularly treasure one of them, the big engineering works in Ranchi, which is in the state where I was born."

"I am glad our aid will be given to your home state."

"Another project in which you will take part is also very close to my heart. That is an oil refinery being built in my second state."

"It gives me satisfaction to know that our aid corresponds with the interests of your country and also your personal interests," Khrushchov remarked, smiling.

"Of course, I take an interest in everything that is being done for our country," the President said.

"That is the right approach. I am also, of course, pleased to hear news from my native village; it is gratifying to see that it is thriving. But you are still happier when you see the great progress of your country as a whole!" Premier Khrushchov said in conclusion.

The head of the Soviet Government paid a call on Prime Minister Nehru. Here, as in the Presidential Palace, Indian and foreign photographers had a busy time.

"Comrade Gromyko ought to say something funny so that the pictures come out brighter," Khrushchov remarked.

"That's a serious matter," Foreign Minister Gromyko replied, in the same jocular tone. "We should have thought about it beforehand."

Everybody laughed.

"My wife asked me to convey hearty greetings and best wishes to you and your daughter, Mr. Prime Minister," said Premier Khrushchov. "The flu prevented her from coming. Influenza ignores Notes from a Foreign Minister."

There was a minute's pause in the conversation as tea was served.

"When I was a boy," Khrushchov remarked, "I lived in the Donbas. People there usually take their tea with milk, and I got used to that."

"As far as I know, there is a campaign on in the United States to curtail milk production," Nehru said.

"There are many competing companies there. Evidently Coca-Cola or some other company wants to sell more of its product by reducing sales of milk. The result is a campaign."

"That's true," Nehru replied, smiling. "Have you heard the expression Coca-Colonisation?"



"Our country has been delivered from contradictions of the kind that exist in capitalist society," Khrushchov continued, following up that remark indirectly. "There are many private firms there, and they hire skilled advertising men to think up arguments in favour of their products and against their rivals' products. There is none of that in our country."

The conversation then turned to the programme of Khrushchov's stay in India.

Nehru announced that the Minister of Steel had suddenly fallen ill and would not be able to accompany the head of the Soviet Government on the trip to Bhilai.

"I wish him a speedy recovery," Khrushchov said warmly, and then added, "I feel a kinship with people who have to do with maize and steel."

Nehru smiled. "Is there a connection between the two?"

"Why, of course, a direct connection! More steel means a stronger country; more maize means more meat and butter, and therefore a better life for people!"

"But the same could be said about wheat."

"Yes, but a considerable part of the world's population gets its food from maize, which is the foundation of live-stock raising."

"That's true," Nehru agreed, "but I think the main crop for our country is rice. It all depends on the climate. In the north three-quarters of our crop area is under wheat, and in the south three-quarters is rice."

"We're expanding our production of wheat, potatoes and rice on a large scale," Khrushchov said, "and at the same time we are conducting a very broad campaign in favour of maize in our country. That is highly important for the development of live-stock raising. We have made some progress in this direction in recent years, with the result that our animal husbandry is now advancing at a fast rate. During this seven-year period we shall overtake America in the output of live-stock products."

Each of Premier Khrushchov's meetings and conversations is, to a certain degree, a continuation of the previous

one. In this way the horizon of the conversations is broadened step by step, and problems of vital importance ring out more and more distinctly behind the friendly jest. Is not this atmosphere of friendliness and mutual understanding one of the characteristic features of the policy of peaceful coexistence, the policy of friendship between the peoples of the two great countries?!

### CITY OF THE SUN AND THE MOON

Looking at New Delhi, we realised the truth of the saying that cities in a festive mood all seem alike. For it was only gradually that the specific architectural features of New Delhi, the Indian capital, took shape for us through the dazzling and deafening jumble of colour, movement and rhythm.

Guidebooks invariably contain interesting stories about the birth of cities. They tell us that Cairo, for instance, owes its origin to the sentimental whim of a warrior in ancient times on whose tent a pair of doves had built their nest. Feeling sorry for the birds, he left his tent there. As for New York, that town of wonders and shady business transactions, it arose because the American Indians were not sharp traders; they were taken in, and they sold the Island of Manhattan to the newcomers for a song.

We also learn from the guidebooks that New Delhi never would have been built if the British viceroy had not decided to go for a canter in the environs of Old Delhi one summer day in 1911, if his horse had not stumbled, and if it had not happened to stumble at a place offering a superb view of the ruins of the old Purana Quila fortress etched against the hot sky. New Delhi never would have arisen, the story goes, had not the Englishman remarked, "The view from this place is excellent. Let's build something here."

Even in that guidebook written for fanciers of history



as seen through rose-coloured glasses one senses a dig at the colonialists, who stumbled in the vast expanses of India. The people probably never even heard of that horsey version of the foundation of New Delhi.

We decided to ask a person from the thick crowd gathered around the Presidential Palace, where Khrushchov had just arrived, how he thought the present-day Indian capital had arisen.

The young man who had just had a tremendous response to his call of *Hindi Rusi* as a volunteer cheer leader was obviously perplexed by our question. His expression clearly said: what's that got to do with anything?

"We're journalists," we explained.

"Ah, journalists."

"Soviet journalists."

The young man's face lit up.

"Oh, that's different!"

He was ready to answer all our questions. Who was he? A worker, a spinner from a big textile mill in Old Delhi. His name was Mangleh Lal. He was twenty-two. Instead of telling us when, how and why New Delhi was founded, he said:

"Your Premier used to be a worker himself. I came here to see him. The city—well, it was built like that especially." Mangleh Lal grinned from ear to ear.

"Like what?"

"Beautiful. Not a bit like Old Delhi!"

As is always the case during chance street encounters and interviews in India, a crowd instantly grew up around us. Now we had dozens of experts on the history of New Delhi in our midst. They were eager to say something extraordinary about the city, to make the holiday gayer than ever by adding their fantasy to it.

"When was Delhi built?"

"At night!" Lal exclaimed gaily.

"Why at night?"

"Because the sun is too bright to look at, but you can look at the moon."

"But why look at the moon?"

"So that the gods could tell you how to build the city," Lal replied with a wink.

"Which gods? And what could they have suggested?"

"The gods of science could have suggested how to build the city going by the shape of the moon!" the young spinner wound up triumphantly.

In answer to our question we had seen the birth of a wonderful fairy-tale of our age, created in an instant by talented and semiliterate people of a former colony, people to whom the radio and newspapers were still a luxury.

A booklet entitled *What the Country Should Plan in the Next Decade*, written by representatives of manufacturing and commercial circles, was published recently in India. Speaking of the state of education, its authors say: "The level of education in our country hardly measures up to any modern standards. Only 17 per cent of India's population is literate."

But even though patched together out of a scrap of knowledge, a spark of fantasy and a mound of superstition, the folk-tale carried more charm than the anecdote about the horse that had stumbled. It had the charm of poetry and dreams. One even felt inclined to believe that the contours of the Indian capital had prompted folk fantasy that "lunar" story.

Arcs, semi-arcs, circles and ovals predominate in the city's architecture lines. The entrance to the Vigyan Bhavan, one of the handsomest buildings in Delhi, built recently as a place for Indian and international conferences, was designed by the architect in the shape of a round grotto of black marble.

The Parliament building is circular. The Presidential Palace is crowned with a bronze dome. Adjoining the palace is the building of the Secretariat, the same soft grey colour as the palace. The Secretariat building is also



crowned with domes. Connaught-Place, Delhi's commercial centre, is round. On holidays the squares are as noisy as stadiums, but on weekdays they are empty and silent, like the seas on the moon. Close by, incidentally, is the big green oval of the National Stadium framed in wooden stands seating 50,000.

Many of the streets are lined with tall trees that meet overhead, forming tunnels where it is not so burning hot but where it is so stuffy the air seems to have been pumped out along with the heat. The trees spread thick shadows on the ground.

The street names in New Delhi are symbolic. Many were changed when India became independent. King's Way is now Rajpath, the State Road, while Queen's Way is Janpath, or the People's Road.

The path of the Indian people to freedom and independence is bound up with the walls of Old Delhi, an important part of the Indian capital.

Among the monuments in Old Delhi is the Red Fort. In his *Story of Civilisation* the noted American author Will Durant calls this fort, built in the 17th century by the Emperor Shahjahan, "the most magnificent palace in the East—perhaps in the world". The ceilings were decorated with gold and silver, and the marble columns in the halls were delicately carved. The walls in the Palace of Colours, the name given to several rooms in the "queen's private chambers", were decorated with crystal. The Peacock Throne of gold and precious stones, which was later carried off by one of Delhi's conquerors, was for many years regarded as a wonder by people of many countries. The Red Fort was destroyed in the earthquake of 1715 and later restored. In 1857 the British set up a garrison inside that magnificent architectural monument.

It was in 1857 that the first great Indian uprising took place, when the Indian soldiers in the British army revolted against British rule. The walls of Old Delhi still bear traces of bullets from those days. In response to the vol-

leys, slogans and songs flared up in India. "Raise our banner over the Red Fort!" the Indian people demanded.

There are people in the West today who talk about the "progressive role" played by colonialism. But a colonialist talking about progress is like a loathsome toad saying, "Of course there's progress. Look at me—I was once a tadpole."

The traces of cannon balls and bullets on the Kashmir Gate and the walls of Old Delhi are more eloquent than any declarations and treatises about the "benefits" brought by the European enslavers.

In Mathura Road stand the ruins of an old fortress wall, with a stone gate which the people call Huni Darwaza meaning "sanguinary gate" in Urdu. Participants in the uprising were executed there and their corpses left to hang for many days to intimidate the people of Delhi. It was against that fortress wall that the colonialists executed patriots.

Vereshchagin's painting *The British Execution in India* presents a soul-searing picture of the barbaric reprisals the colonialists took against the Indian patriots. We see men tied to the muzzles of cannon. One, a bearded old man in a white robe, has raised his eyes to heaven as if asking all the gods imaginable: where is justice? Other victims lay tied to the barrels of the guns. British soldiers stand at attention. In another instant the monstrous slaughter will take place.

This painting by a Russian artist is an indictment of colonialism.

Poverty, hunger, filth and frightful diseases—all the things colonialism bestowed on India—still strike the eye in the narrow, crowded streets of Old Delhi. No wonder Mangleh Lal, the spinner, said, speaking about the new town, "Not a bit like Old Delhi!"

Shortly before Khrushchov's arrival in Delhi, Indian friends had invited one of us to attend a meeting of the trade union committee at a textile mill.



It was not easy to find the committee in its little room on the second floor of a house near the vegetable market. Numbers on houses in Old Delhi are evidently still as much of a luxury as radio and electricity. But for that matter was it really possible to number all that confusion of houses, shanties and lean-tos of tin and plywood, and the narrow spaces between houses, where people also live?

We had been given a description of the house and we hunted for it amidst the kaleidoscope of the Indian street scene. We made our way past tiny tea-rooms and coffee-rooms, past vendors and shops selling footwear, fabrics of all colours and household wares, such as brushes, keys and locks. The locks and keys looked odd lying there on the counters of the tiny shops squeezed in between hovels. What could the people who lived there keep under lock and key? Only a wrathful memory of colonialism, which had reduced a once flourishing town to such a state.

Old Delhi reminds one of a bazaar squeezed into an artisan's shop. Their feet tucked under them, vendors sit beside their trays of brown jalei cakes, laddu sweets, bananas, oranges, apples and nuts; everything, vendors included, is covered with flies. The vendors shout at the top of their lungs, as if they and their bananas and oranges hung over an abyss, as if only an immediate purchase could save them from ruin. Bony, homeless cows gaze mournfully at the fruit. There are many cows in the streets of Old Delhi. They cannot be killed for meat because they are sacred, yet there is nothing to feed them.

Next to the trays, and sometimes practically under them, are greasy pieces of canvas with simple tools laid out on them. Their owners mend, repair and refurbish everything under the sun, from rusty beads and rickety bicycles to pitchers and sandals, statues of the gods and picture postcards of movie stars.

Now and then you will see something of quite a different order on a piece of canvas—miracles of the East: cobras writhing and swaying to the shrill piping of a snake charmer, or a monkey going through antics. You will also see a misshapen leper crawling along between a fruit tray and a "repair shop", begging for alms.

When we finally found the little trade union committee room where the meeting was being held we felt the main item on the agenda should be a condemnation of colonialism, that colonialism should be branded and cursed for all to hear from that tiny trade union room and from each of those thousands of shanties, hovels and dusty shops still to be found along the sides of stinking ditches.

But the committee was now busy with current matters.

It was considering two questions: a petition to the owner of the mill about giving regular employment to those working only part-time at the mill, and another petition about raising the wages of several of the workers. One of them, named Harbais, was present at the meeting. He was a weaver, aged forty, who had worked at the mill for twenty-four years. He had a wife, mother and five children, and his wages were quite insufficient to support them.

Just before the end of the meeting the Indian journalist who accompanied us asked whether there was any more business.

"No. There are only two points on the agenda."

The journalist seemed surprised. "I thought your meeting would discuss how the mill workers will go out to welcome Nikita Khrushchov."

A member of the trade union committee, a weaver named Baburam, shrugged his shoulders. "What's there to discuss? Everything is clear."

It became clear to us, too, a few minutes later, when the committee members took us to visit some of the workers.

One was the home of Omprakash Gupta, a dyer at the Birla factory—if the word "home" can be applied to a room



of eight square metres in which seven persons live. In one of the three niches in the stone wall there were big tin boxes on the floor and books on an upper shelf. In another were highly polished bronze pots and handsome pitchers.

"He'll put all that in a cart and he and his entire family will go to New Delhi for the whole day to welcome Mr. Khrushchov!" said Baburam. "Everybody will go to meet Khrushchov!"

The two windows in Omprakhash Gupta's tiny room look out not into the street but into a big stone cellar elegantly titled a "hall". The door also opens out into the "hall", as do the windows and doors of the other dwellings. They are like so many dark, grey caves. There is no electricity, of course. Neither the sun nor the moon penetrates into those habitations.

Like the bullet-scarred stones of the Kashmir Gate, those caves are an indictment of the colonialists, who for long years ravaged and plundered the great country.

Is it not symbolic that people emerged from those slum dwellings to greet the representative of the Soviet Union with smiles and cheers? They have faith in the friendship and assistance of the Soviet Union. They know the time will come when good houses will replace their slums. They know that not only the Kutab Minar tower, a magnificent monument of ancient Indian architecture and art, but the plain, austere smokestacks of the giant Bhilai Works, built with the help of the Soviet Union, which rise even higher than the tower, are an ornament to India today. Beside the Kutab Minar stands the Iron Pillar, 1,700 years old, an amazing example of ancient Indian craftsmanship. It is commonly believed that if a person encircles the pillar with his arms standing with his back to it, happiness will come to him. The people's dream about metal, the iron muscles their country needs, is reflected in this popular belief.

Today, however, the people of India are no longer simply waiting for happiness to come to them. They are going out to meet it, they are fighting for it.

## CREATORS AND PRESERVERS OF BEAUTY

February has only slightly curbed the southern sun, which makes itself felt even early in the morning. Despite the early hour, Delhi has long since been awake, and more and more of the familiar sounds of a working day fill the city. The streets become crowded and animated. Amidst the bustle we see groups of children hurrying to school.

Dark-haired and big-eyed, some of them barefoot, they look small in those streets crowded with carts, sacred cows and motor-cars. Each child carries a book-bag of striped cloth and a black-board on which he will write as he sits on his haunches in the class-room. The class-room is often no more than a canvas tent on which torrential rains and the blazing sun pour down, and a school may be made up of a dozen or so such tents grouped together in the middle of a noisy, crowded bazaar probably no different from the bazaars of a thousand years ago.

As the children hurry to school they stop every now and then to argue about something and then run to overtake their comrades. These children are a living symbol of the new life that is being born in India, an ancient land that once was a seat of human civilisation but later, shackled by colonial slavery was unable to teach eighty per cent of its population to read and write.

Anyone visiting India is sure to go to Agra to see its architectural gems, particularly the famous Taj Mahal on the bank of the Jumna.

As you gaze at it you try to impress upon your memory every detail of that miracle in white marble, its lovely cupolas and minarets, the exquisite arabesques and the inlays of precious stones. But the Taj Mahal, say the Indians, is like the face of your beloved; you cannot recall it in photographic detail. That may be the reason why you will not find a single description of the Taj Mahal that conveys any idea of what that magnificent monument is really like.



History has not preserved the names of the architects who designed the Taj Mahal.

There are European historians who claim it is the work of an Italian or French architect. Indian historians have reason to believe that it was designed by a well-known architect of Shiraz as a monument to his beloved. Shahjahan, they say, happened to see the design and appointed him his court architect. But whoever he was, he became a genius the moment he conceived that incomparable creation, the moment he saw it in his mind's eye.

The Taj Mahal would have remained in the mind of its designer, however, or at best on paper, if not for the tens of thousands of Indian workers who carried baskets of earth and heavy slabs on their heads, who so skilfully fitted together the marble blocks to stand for centuries, who carved those delicate arabesques in marble, who made the superb inlays in the walls, who laid out the gardens and built the fountains.

When the Taj Mahal was finished, Shahjahan burned with impatience to see it in all its beauty. But that was impossible because of the mass of scaffolding inside and outside. It would have taken months, if not years, to remove it. Then, say historians, the emperor was advised to allow the people to help clear it away, each person to take for himself as much as he could carry off. The order was given, and in one day the Taj Mahal was completely cleared of scaffolding.

Nameless workers built the Taj Mahal. That treasure on the bank of the Jumna, that "poem in marble", is a supreme monument to the unparalleled craftsmanship of Indian workers, many of whom never lived to see the mausoleum completed, because they died from the exhausting toil, hunger and deprivation.\*

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\* It is known that outstanding craftsmen from different parts of India as well as from Shiraz, Turkey, Arabia, Syria, Samarkand and Bukhara helped to build the mausoleum. The marble, stone of differ-

Like hundreds of other palaces, temples and parks, the Taj Mahal was built by the Indian people, but the people never had a chance to enjoy them, for their sacred property was seized by domestic and foreign rulers.

The Indian people have not yet won back all their property, but times are changing. It gave us the deepest satisfaction to see the admiration and affection with which thousands of ordinary Indians—peasants who looked as if they had come from afar, stone-masons who had just finished work, and students with books under their arms—gazed at the works of their ancestors, at the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort and Kutab Minar tower in Delhi, the palaces at Mysore, or the museums in Bombay. The Indian people are generous about showing their cultural riches to the world.

We shall now skip ahead to tell about Khrushchov's attendance of a performance of *Kumara-sambhava*, one of India's finest works of art, at a theatre in Delhi. An epic drama by India's classical poet Kalidasa, it was staged by the Indian Academy of Arts.

A characteristic feature of classical Indian drama is its combination of speech, music and dancing. The musicians, a small group playing national instruments resembling the balalaika and oval drums, usually sit on the stage. The actors dance as they recite their lines.

Among the chief forms of the classical Indian dance are the manipuri and the kathak. The first might be called dancing to music, and the second music accompanied by dancing. In the manipuri you have airy movements, leaps, changes of rhythm, and muted dialogues to a gentle, wistful melody. The manipuri almost always speaks of love. In the kathak the dancers wear tiny bells on their ankles, sometimes hundreds of them. A first-class dancer is one who can make the bells sound like rolls of thunder or tinkle like a single bell ringing high up in the mountains.

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ent kinds and wood came from India, Ceylon, Baghdad and Arabia. Malachite was brought from Russia.—Authors' note.



Uday Shankar, famous Indian dancer well known abroad, who has created two Indian ballets on social themes, *Rhythm of Life* and *Labour and Machines*, started a movement several years ago to bring the manipuri and the kathak closer together. Another famous dancer, the late Shanti Bardhan, enriched Indian art with bold compositions like *Spirit of India* and *India Immortal*, that have become classics of modern Indian ballet.

The striking talent and fruitful activity of Uday Shankar and Shanti Bardhan have influenced all the Indian theatres and introduced new elements into interpretations of even the traditional classics. Folk scenes in Kalidasa dramas have been made more modern; more pungency and social awareness have been put into them. This may not be entirely in keeping with history, but it is certainly in keeping with the mood of the people.

When, in 1792, the Russian historian and author Karamzin published his translation of several sections of Kalidasa's play *Sakuntala*, he declared: "I find Kalidasa as great as Homer. Both received their brushes from Nature and both portrayed Nature. I translated several scenes from *Sakuntala* for my own pleasure and then decided to publish them in a Moscow magazine, hoping that these fragrant flowers of Asian literature will prove pleasing to the many readers who possess taste and a love of real poetry."

After the presentation of *Kumara-sambhava*, Khrushchov warmly thanked the performers and the heads of the Indian Academy of Arts, which is preserving the country's centuries-old culture.

On February 13, 1960, Khrushchov visited an exhibition of the works of Svyatoslav Roerich in Delhi.

Would you call Roerich an Indian artist or a Russian artist? Together with his father, the noted painter Nikolai Roerich, he left Russia before the October Revolution of 1917. His native language is Russian, and he takes a deep interest in life in the Soviet Union, closely following, in particular, scientific achievements and the work of Soviet

artists, actors and writers. His wife, Devika Rani, is a well-known Indian film actress, cultural researcher, and member of the Indian Academy of Arts.

Svyatoslav Roerich and his wife met Premier Khrushchov and his party at the entrance to the exhibition and accompanied them through the four rooms, in which more than 120 works were on display.

The Soviet visitors studied the paintings with great interest. One, entitled *Sisters*, showed a barefoot girl carrying on her back her little sister, wrapped in a brown shawl. The children gaze wonder-eyed at the red flowers, the purple mountains, and a bright yellow waterfall pouring down from above like a column of sunshine. In *Mountain Pass* a golden cloud can be seen beyond a purple mist; above the blue mountains scud huge, heavy, silvery-lilac clouds. Men march ahead persistently against the wind, marching, as it were, towards the shining vistas visible beyond the mist. Mountains are one of the artist's favourite subjects.

"Some people might argue with you about whether such colours actually exist," Khrushchov remarked to the artist. "But I have seen them with my own eyes. There *are* such beautiful scenes in nature, only the point is to feel and understand them and be able to paint them!"

Khrushchov did not elucidate where he had seen such colours. He said, "There *are* such beautiful scenes in nature." And no doubt every Soviet or Indian visitor to the exhibition will agree, for what the artist depicted was the beauty of nature and not geography or climate; in his pictures we see riotous, festive colours that exist but which people sometimes fail to see, feel, record or truthfully reflect in art.

Svyatoslav Roerich does not limit himself to themes from Indian life. Attracted, for instance, by an immortal legend of the Uzbek people, he painted a picture called *Leila and Mejnun*. Here everything is bathed in the glow of a sunset. We see a fiery-red palm tree thrown by a hur-



ricane on a blood-coloured hill. Amidst the fire and wind of nature in turmoil, a maiden bends over a youth.

One of Roerich's finest works is his portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru. He painted it eighteen years ago, when Nehru was his guest at his home in Bangalore.

Khrushchov stood looking a long time at the portrait, which Nehru himself considers a successful one, and then said, "A splendid portrait!"

"I tried to convey Nehru's visionary expression," said Roerich.

Devika Rani remarked that as far as she remembered, when working on the portrait Svyatoslav Roerich re-read Nehru's well-known articles about the Soviet Union, published after his 1927 visit. Nehru wrote:

"I felt full of energy and vitality.... My outlook was wider, and nationalism by itself seemed to me definitely a narrow and insufficient creed. Political freedom, independence, were no doubt essential, but ... without social freedom and a socialistic structure of society and the state, neither the country nor the individual could develop much. I felt I had a clearer perception of world affairs, more grip on the present-day world.... Soviet Russia, despite certain unpleasant aspects, attracted me greatly, and seemed to hold forth a message of hope to the world."

In many of his works Svyatoslav Roerich strives to convey the hope for the future, the glance of a man piercing the distance.

After looking at the exhibition in Delhi, Khrushchov told newsmen: "I have visited an exhibition which presented the work of a big artist, and in this work the life of people is depicted. Svyatoslav Roerich's paintings show that man does not bend his head in the face of difficulties but comes to grips with nature and always pushes forward. I am not a critic. I am a plain man when it comes to appraising the work of an artist. And as a plain man I derived great satisfaction from visiting this exhibition. I wish the artist further creative successes."

A few months later, in May, an exhibition of Svyatoslav Roerich's works was opened in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. The Soviet public took a great interest in the show. Khrushchov and other Party and Government leaders visited it. They were given a cordial welcome by Roerich and his wife, and also by K. P. S. Menon, the Indian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.

"We have just come from the Soviet Russia Exhibition," Khrushchov said, "where we saw the work of Russian artists. Your style of painting is unusual. Our spectator is not accustomed to it. Your colours are specific, too. How do you like Moscow?"

"The exhibition in Moscow is a great joy to me," Roerich replied. "We like it here very much. We spend all our time at the exhibition, working."

"But you ought to rest, too."

As in Delhi, Svyatoslav Roerich and his wife accompanied Khrushchov to the exit.

"I wish you happiness," Khrushchov said.

"Thank you," Roerich replied. "Now you come to see us in India."

"I've been there twice—I ought to have a conscience," Khrushchov said with a laugh. "Now we're looking forward to guests from India, to the President and the Prime Minister."

Those of us who attended the Roerich shows in Delhi and Moscow saw how art helps to bring people closer; we saw the growing cultural bonds between the two countries.

Many fine words about the forceful impression made by Soviet culture were said at a reception given for Premier Khrushchov by the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society in Calcutta:

"The achievements of your people in the field of art, literature, science and technology over the past forty years are so colossal that today they leave not a shade of doubt that nothing is beyond man's understanding and that he is the sole arbiter of his destiny."



Those words express the main attraction of Soviet culture to the peoples of all countries: the finest works of Soviet literature and art teach man to be the real master of his destiny. In one of his articles the Indian film director Bimal Roy said that Indian cinema people had learned a great deal from pictures like *The Battleship Potyomkin* and *Stone Flower*. Gorky's *Mother*, Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered* and many other books that have been translated into Indian languages carry the same message.

Here is an example of how Soviet art wins people's hearts and of the at times unusual roads by which it reaches another nation.

One day one of the authors of this book was invited to the home of Mr. Raj George, an Indian schoolmaster, who lived in the town of Trichur in southern India.

Trichur, the schoolmaster told the journalist, is a small business centre with three places of interest: an irrigation dam, a textile factory and the Vadakunaatan Temple. The town owes its name, and, as a matter of fact, its origin as well, to the temple, around which it grew up. The Vadakunaatan Temple is dedicated to three gods: Shiva, the god of strength, Brahma, the creator, and Vishnu, who represents "the soul of the universe". It seems that originally the town was named "Tri Shiva Pur", and later this was shortened to Trichur. Raj George also said there was a Catholic church in the town (he himself was a Catholic). He asked the journalist many questions about Russian and Soviet music. "Your splendid music reaches us only accidentally," he said. Several Indians noiselessly entered the room and joined the schoolmaster's grandmother, Mrs. Celestine Paul, in listening to the conversation. A few minutes later the new arrivals exchanged a few words among themselves, and Raj George said, in English, "You see, they're waiting for me to go to church."

When the journalist excused himself and stood up to go,

his host said, "One last question. Could you sing the Soviet Anthem for me? I'm not sure we have the tune right."

The journalist sang it as best he could.

"That's fine," the schoolmaster said with an encouraging smile. "I'm not inviting you to come along because I don't play your anthem properly yet. Now I think I'll learn it more quickly."

"But I thought you said you were going to church?"

The schoolmaster shook his head energetically. "Of course. I play your anthem on the organ there. All the Catholics come to listen to it, and also people who profess Hinduism. Besides the church organ there is no other musical instrument in Trichur."

One of the other Indians, a teen-ager, said something with enthusiasm, smiling. The schoolmaster translated what he had said into English: "The music of Moscow lives in Trichur!"

That remained in the journalist's memory as one of the town's features of interest.

The best Soviet plays, paintings and songs teach people how to be masters of their own destiny. Soviet art teaches courage, staunchness and heroism in the battle for the people's happiness. In the literature and art of other nations the Soviet people appreciate optimistic, life-asserting features. They are deeply moved by the writings of the great Rabindranath Tagore, with their forceful and cleansing hatred of colonialism. Prem Chand has long been one of the Soviet reader's most popular authors. The work of the contemporary Indian artist Krishna Hebbar, whose main theme is man's constructive endeavour, has been favourably reviewed in the Soviet press.

Translations of classical and modern Indian literature are published in the Soviet Union. The number of their readers is growing steadily, for works by Indian writers are translated not only into Russian but many other languages



of the Soviet Union: Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Armenian, Georgian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tatar, Kazakh and others.

Personal contacts between Soviet authors and Indian writers, poets, critics and literary scholars are strengthening Soviet-Indian cultural ties.

Indian authors attended the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, as well as numerous gatherings at the Writers' Union and the Gorky Institute of World Literature, and anniversary celebrations. Soviet writers have visited India and attended the Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi. Indian writers were guests of their Soviet colleagues at the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in Tashkent.

An exhibition of Russian and Soviet art that attracted tens of thousands of visitors was arranged in India at the request of the All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society and a group of Indian artists. "The show made an indelible impression on all Indian art workers," Baroda Ukil, founder of the All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, said. It enjoyed great popularity in Calcutta and Bombay as well as in the capital.

Muscovites and residents of other cities of the Soviet Union have had a chance to see works of ancient, medieval and modern Indian art. Some of these works were turned over to the Soviet Union as a gift.

A Culture and Art of India Exhibition was opened in Moscow at the time of Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union several years ago. On display were Indian paintings, handicraft articles, books and weapons, as well as works by pre-revolutionary Russian and contemporary Soviet artists; materials on the development of ties between India and Russia and the history of Indology in the U.S.S.R. were also included. Simultaneously, the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library in Leningrad arranged an exhibition of book illustrations relating to the Indian Republic. Similar exhibitions were opened in Kiev, Tbilisi, Tallinn, Sverdlovsk, Odessa, Gorky, Baku, Chelyabinsk and elsewhere.

It would be a formidable job indeed to list all that has been done in the past decade to promote cultural ties between India and the Soviet Union. And a still bigger programme lies ahead.

"We are your comrades in the work of promoting friendship and cultural ties," the members of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society told Khrushchov.

A feature which Soviet and Indian writers and artists have in common is their ties with life. Gorky's famous question, "On Which Side Are You, 'Masters of Culture'?" has been voiced in many a message from the Soviet public to writers, actors and artists of West and East. And on many an occasion India's progressive masters of culture have joined their voice to that of the Soviet people. The words of love and respect for the Soviet Union uttered by Rabindranath Tagore will never be forgotten.

Gorky's question rings out again today, reminding masters of culture that crafty masters of spiritual aggression are operating often side by side with them.

There is a kind of aggression masked by bright book covers, and ingenious ads, by the slick pen and the crude brush, mocking common sense, or by wild "music" that resembles the wail of a siren, the din in a sheet rolling shed, or the ravings of a madman.

American patterns of murder, violence and perversion are put between garish covers of all kinds—from comics to scientific tomes—and sent out to various countries. The same patterns of crime and hatred of man worm their way into the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people through motion pictures.

While in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta many of us saw that offensive under the American flag to conquer the minds of the Indians. We could not help recalling that a year earlier, in 1959, the *London Times* had urged a stubborn "battle for Asia", a battle on the cultural front, and had complained that the sputnik and the rocket were more



effective Russian thrusts in the battle than millions of pamphlets or thousands of hours of broadcasts.

The imperialist press cannot drop military terminology even when speaking about culture! But after all, can the leopard change his spots? Still, the *Times* comment does contain one observation that is correct: Soviet achievements in technology and art and the growing Soviet cultural ties with other countries are far more convincing than the propaganda with which the American and other propagandists of the notorious "free world" are trying to poison people's minds.

Can the films with which Hollywood is flooding the screens in India, other Asian countries, Europe and America evoke anything besides a feeling of revulsion? In *The Horrors of Dracula*, a recent production, a vampire digs its claws into all the other characters of the film one by one, drinking their blood with gusto. In another picture, *Man Inside Out*, a mysterious inventor turns out to be first a conjurer, then a thief and lastly a murderer. There is no need to continue the list, for it would be impossible to enumerate all the murderers, vampires or otherwise, that are being shipped out to various countries of the world to warp and corrupt people's minds along lines suitable to the aggressors.

As they work to twist men's hearts and minds and turn them into thugs prepared to start the mass murder of war at the drop of a hat, the producers of the vampire-books and vampire-films spout their pet theory of "freedom of art" and "independence of the artist". If, they declare, an artist wants to paint a picture of a skeleton holding a bottle of whisky instead of, say, a girl with a plate of peaches, what is there to prevent him? That reminds us of the story about the withered branch of a tree which boasted, "At last I'm independent!"

The best works of Indian art and literature show that the Indian people distinguish the "independence" of the withered branch from real independence; they appreciate

and are preserving their culture, created over the centuries.

A nation which breathed life into rock and created the famous caves at Ajanta and Elura and the granite bas-reliefs at Mahabalipuram, which built the Taj Mahal and composed the epic *Mahabharata*, which gave the world such great writers as Kalidasa and Tagore, a nation which has a subtle appreciation and understanding of beauty, cannot help protesting against the gaudy monstrosities of the transoceanic "culture".

An episode we once witnessed at the Taj Mahal struck us as being characteristic. The gates were kept closed to the general public for a long time because of some sort of official visit. The crowd outside grew—a colourful, polyglot crowd. Families that had clearly come from a long way off settled themselves on the grass for a snack; staid officials stood about in small groups and conversed. Suddenly a harsh automobile horn rent the air as a black limousine carrying American tourists cut into the crowd and sped on towards the gate. The Americans could see that cars were not allowed there, and that the other cars had parked at the side, but they came on nevertheless without lowering speed.

But then an Indian worker stepped into its path with arm upraised, and the limousine came to a stop, its brakes screeching. A moment later it started backing up slowly and jerkily, like a black cockroach, to laughter and jeers from the crowd.

That was not simply an American limousine backing up. The episode was symbolical of the retreat, under popular pressure, of those who sought to dominate another nation.



## OUR COMMON AIM IS PEACE

### RAJPATH

It is a bright sunny day, like most of the year in Delhi. Very rarely will a cloudlet appear in the sky. It is only with the coming of the monsoons that the sky swells with lowering clouds. Three months of heavy rainfall, and then a serene hot sky once more. But just now the monsoons are a long way off.

The motorcade of Soviet visitors drives down an avenue that runs straight as an arrow. This street emerges on a broad square with large fountains. To the right and left rise the red stone buildings of administrative offices, and blank walls with little towers on the corners. The road climbs steeply. In front of us, reared high into the sky, stands a solitary pillar. It grows before our eyes. Beyond it lies the palace.

This great sandstone building for a long time served as the residency of the British Viceroy, after the colonial authorities had transferred the capital from mutinous Calcutta to New Delhi. The English architect Edwin L. Lutyens, who designed this building, made a good job of it. The magnitude of the palace, its columns, arches and domes, the cast-iron railings and high walls are all calculated to inspire respect and awe towards the "immutable" power of British rule.

The road which leads to the square facing the palace is called Rajpath—State Road.

Every year on January 26, Republic Day, this road is filled with thousands of Indians. Indian troops—infantry, cavalry, motorised infantry and sailors—march past. The young people move down it singing and dancing. Colourful platforms representing the various Indian states follow each other in close succession—Assam with its oil derricks, Madhya Pradesh with its smokestacks of Bhilai, Rajasthan with the country's first mechanised farm, green Mysore, rice-growing Madras, Kerala—the land of coconut palms, industrial Bombay, the Himalayan beauty—Kashmir.

All India, multifarious and many-tongued, sweeps along here in a single mighty stream, extraordinarily vivid and picturesque, gay with banners, colourful saris, turbans, and boyscout shirts. You will find here the most unexpected combinations: clattering tanks and soft-padded peaceful elephants, the latest fire-arms and the arbalests of the Naga tribesmen, zooming aircraft and stately ox teams.

The State Road. What a difficult and thorny path it was until India at last took her destiny into her own hands. But before that happened, what sufferings the Indian people underwent during the dark centuries of foreign dominion. Volumes could be written about this. But we shall mention only a few facts.

The Indian people will keep for ever fresh the memory of the great revolt of 1857, of the heroes who gave their lives in that battle for their country's liberation from foreign dominion. They are proud of the heroic deeds of these patriots to whose fame they have added by their struggle against the colonialists.

The powerful upswing in the national-liberation movement in India in 1905 was another warning sign to the colonialists.

"World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia," Lenin wrote in his article "The Awakening of Asia", "have finally awakened Asia. Hundreds of millions of the down-



trodden and benighted have awakened from medieval stagnation to a new life and to the fight for elementary human rights and democracy.”

The whole country was seething, especially the industrial centres of Calcutta and Bombay, where the proletariat had grown into a formidable force. Under the pressure of the national-liberation movement, British dominion in India was shaken. With the victory of the Great October Revolution in Russia the struggle of India's people acquired a fresh impetus. In order to preserve their position the colonialists began to introduce meagre reforms. A Council of State and a Legislative Assembly—impotent appendages to the colonial machine—were set up in 1919.

But these bogus “reforms”, of which the British advocates of colonialism's “civilising mission” are so fond of talking, went with military violence, with the most savage and barbarous treatment that outraged the human dignity of the Indians. Cruel suppression of the disaffected, and physical extermination of anybody who dared to aspire to his country's freedom—such were the methods used by Great Britain to preserve her power in India.

In Amritsar the British colonial troops fired upon a peaceful meeting, killing over a thousand and wounding several thousand inhabitants. Martial law and the curfew were imposed, the inhabitants being forbidden to appear in the streets after a certain hour. People who happened to be abroad at that hour were subjected to a degrading form of punishment: as a sign of loyalty to the Crown they were made to crawl home on their hands and knees. Those who refused to submit were shot.

This is how the well-known Indian writer Krishna Chandra describes the event in his story *Amritsar*:

“Shortly before the curfew which the authorities introduced in the city under the martial law, four women were walking down Ram Das Street. Two of them were Moslems, one was a Sikh, and one a Hindu. All four were going to the greengrocer's to do some shopping. As they passed

the Golden Temple of the Sikhs each of them bowed low. They had to hurry, because it was nearing the curfew hour. All over the street were traces of the blood of those who had fought for freedom. The women lingered, chatting, over their shopping. And when they were returning home only a few minutes remained until the ban came into force.

“‘Let’s go through this street,’ said Begam. ‘We’ll make it in time.’

“‘But there are English soldiers there,’ answered Paru.

“‘And you can’t trust them,’ Shamkor added.

“‘They won’t touch women,’ said Zeinab. ‘We’ll cover our faces and hurry past.’

“The four women proceeded on their way. After a while they were stopped by a military patrol. The patrol commander said:

“‘Salute this banner. It’s the national flag of the British Empire.’

“The women fearfully saluted it.

“‘And now crawl over to that spot on your knees,’ the patrol commander ordered, pointing out into the distance.

“‘Crawl on our knees? No fear!’ protested Zeinab.

“‘Yes, on your knees! It’s the government’s order!’ repeated the commander.

“‘I’m going to walk upright!’ exclaimed Shamkor, drawing herself up proudly.

“‘Stop! Stop!’ Paru cried, frightened.

“‘Stop! I’ll shoot!’ the soldier shouted after her.

“But Shamkor continued to go forward.

“A shot rang out. Shamkor dropped. Zeinab and Begam looked at one another and kneeled down. The British soldier was pleased. He thought the women were going to obey his order.

“The kneeling women lifted up their arms. But in a few seconds both were on their feet again and started walking upright with the intention of crossing the street.

“The soldier stood dumbstruck for a moment. Then his



face became livid with anger. He shouldered his rifle and took aim. A shot rang out, followed by a second. . . .

"Paru began to wail:

" 'Now it's my turn to die. O, my husband, my children, my dear ones! Forgive me! I do not want to die. . . . But I have to. . . . I cannot be worse than my sisters. . . . '

"Weeping, Paru moved off.

"The soldier tried to argue with her:

" 'What's the use of weeping! The order of the authorities must be obeyed. Get down on your knees and crawl down this street. And nobody will tell you anything. '

"The soldier knelt, showing her how to do it.

"Still weeping, Paru went up to the British soldier, who immediately got up, and struck him hard across the face. Then, with her head thrown back proudly, she walked on. She walked right in the middle of the road, while the soldier stared at her in surprise. After a while he shouldered his rifle and took aim. . . . Paru was the weakest and most timorous among her women friends. But before dropping dead she walked farthest than all of them. . . .

"Paru, Zeinab, Begam and Shamkor. . . . They were simple women of India. They cherished in their hearts a love for their husbands, and their breasts were full of milk for the children. Bleeding to death, they passed through the dark street of oppression and repression without faltering. Their hearts had said, 'No! Today we shall not bow to you! Now, at last, has come that long-awaited day when all India has awakened. . . . '

After the Second World War the colonialists were no longer able to stem the tide of the national-liberation struggle in India. The slogan "Quit India" was taken up by millions of people who were determined to see the struggle through to the end even if it meant laying down their lives. The once "almighty" British imperialism was compelled to "grant" India independence. In doing so, however, the British colonialists tried their best to keep all the key po-

sitions in the country in their own hands and leave their roots deep in India's soil.

The Hindu-Moslem massacre which started all over India just before the colonialists quitted the country was no mere accident. Led astray by the insidious chauvinistic propaganda of those who had made the cynical slogan "divide and rule" their favourite weapon, people who had been living together amicably for centuries started to kill each other. The colonialists tore the country asunder and set up two Indian states instead of one—India and Pakistan.

"Vivisect me before you vivisect India," Gandhi exclaimed in those days in an attempt to prevent the partitioning of the country and avert a dreadful massacre.

The crime perpetrated by the colonialists was unprecedented in its enormity. Who but the Indians themselves could best tell that ghastly story. Here is another passage from Krishna Chandra's narrative. The events described take place in 1947, when the Hindu-Moslem massacre, which started at the other end of India, reached Amritsar.

"By 3 p.m.," we read, "order was restored in the town and martial law introduced. I hurried to Ram Das Street, and having rendered homage to the Golden Temple of the Sikhs, I walked homeward. I had to pass a gloomy little street where once, on Jalianwala Bagh day, the British had made people crawl on their knees. I thought, what about going down this street, it's a short cut. And I went.

"It was a narrow lane, dark even in the day-time. There were seven or eight Moslem houses in it. All had been burnt or looted. The doors were wide open, the windows smashed and in some places even the roofs were burnt. A deep hush hung over the scene. The dead bodies of women lay in the roadway. I heard someone moaning. An old woman was crawling about in the middle of the road among the corpses. I raised her. She whispered: 'Water, son!'

"Outside the sacred temple of the Sikhs was a water pump. I brought some water in my palms and gave it to the old woman to drink.



" 'God bless you, son! Who are you? But what does it matter? Whoever you are, may God bless you!'

"I tried to raise her, and asked:

" 'Where are you wounded, mother?'

"The old woman answered:

" 'Don't raise me. I shall die here, among my sisters and daughters. You ask, where am I wounded. . . . Ah, son, it is a deep wound. It's in my heart. How will you, Hindus, be able to heal it? How will God forgive you?'

" 'Forgive us, mother!'

"But the old woman was not listening. She went on talking to herself:

" 'First they killed our husbands, then they looted our houses. After that they dragged us women out into the street. There in the street, facing the sacred temple of the Sikhs, they raped us and then shot us. They did not spare even me, though I could be their grandmother. . . .'

"Suddenly she clutched my sleeve.

" 'Do you know that Amritsar is my native town? Every day I made obeisance to the sacred temple of the Sikhs just as I did to my own mosque. Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs lived in our street. We lived together peacefully for several centuries, we respected and loved each other.'

" 'Forgive my coreligionists, mother!'

" 'Do you know who I am? I am the mother of Zeinab! Do you know who Zeinab was? Zeinab was the girl who, on this street, on Jalianwala Bagh day, refused to bow her head before the British, and who here, in this street, on this spot, died the death of the brave for her country and her people. That's who Zeinab was! And I am her mother! Raise me and set me upon my feet. I shall go to these English and tell them: I am Zeinab's mother. I am the mother of Amritsar! I am the mother of Punjab! You have desolated my heart! You have outraged me in my old age! You have cast into the inferno the chaste and innocent souls of my sisters and my young daughters! And I shall

say to them: Was it for the sake of such "freedom" that my Zeinab gave her life?"

"Suddenly she slumped upon my chest. Blood gushed from her mouth. A moment later she was dead.

"Zeinab's mother died in my arms. Her blood was left upon my clothes. I shall keep those clothes as long as I live.

"The images of Sadyk and Udam Prakash rise before my gaze. I see Zeinab before me, walking along with head proudly raised. And these fighters for freedom—Sadyk, Prakash, Zeinab, Shamkor, Paru, Begam—say to me:

" 'We shall return! We shall come back again! We shall return with our clean minds, with our will and determination, with our unsullied honour. We are Mankind, we are the People, and no one can dishonour the People, no one can rob them, no one can kill them....' "

Yes, the path of India's people was a hard and thorny one. If the truth is to be faced, the path ahead is beset with no few difficulties. But the courage and steadfastness of purpose with which the Indian people are pursuing their goal, their notable successes in the fight for liberation inspire the belief that these difficulties will be overcome.

In August 1947 the Union Jack, the flag of the nation's oppressors, was hauled down at long last over the ancient Red Fort, and Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted in its stead the tri-coloured flag of India's independence. On January 26, 1950, the Indian Constitution was adopted and a republic proclaimed. That day had been chosen for the act because twenty years earlier the Executive of the National Congress had proclaimed it Independence Day, and beginning from 1930 the party's resolution concerning the need for achieving complete independence was read out every year.

That is why today it seems as if we are seeing the whole of India in Rajpath.

Today, February 11, Khrushchov is to address the Indian Parliament. And that is where the fleet of cars with the Soviet visitors is headed for.

Do you see that circular building resembling a huge



golden-red crown studded with emeralds of trees? That is the Parliament building. Tall columns belting the first and second storeys can be glimpsed through the foliage.

The cars drive up to one of the arched entrances. Khrushchov steps out of his car and is ushered into the building by Prime Minister Nehru, Vice-President of the Republic Radhakrishnan and the Speaker of the House of the People, Aiyangar. They cross a circular courtyard, the middle of which is occupied by a pool. The water in it is a pale turquoise, either from the reflected sky or the tiled floor.

While the visitors are passing through the courtyard let us hasten into the vaulted halls of Parliament to meet the people assembled there.

The Indian Parliament has two Houses: the House of the People (Lok Sabha), whose 500 members are elected by direct universal vote, and the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), 232 members of which are elected by the legislative assemblies of the states and the remaining 12 members are appointed by the President. Each House has its own assembly halls, but on this occasion all the members of Parliament have gathered in the Central Hall where the joint sessions of both houses are usually held. They are seated in the "pit" behind narrow semi-circular desks facing a small dais. The gallery is reserved for numerous representatives of the press and visitors.

Portraits of India's leading public figures—L. Tilak, Gandhi, Motilal Nehru (father of the present Prime Minister), Maulana Azad and others—look down from the walls. Each portrait is not only a political personality but a glowing page in the history of the Indian people's struggle for their national independence.

The portrait of Gandhi occupies a central place. This man had the honourable title of "Mahatma", meaning "the great-souled", conferred upon him. Gandhi is revered in India as one of his country's greatest servants. Rajghat, the place where his body was cremated on the banks of the Jumna in Delhi, is visited daily by crowds of pilgrims.

The overwhelming majority of those assembled in the hall are members of the National Congress Party, the acknowledged leader of which is Nehru. It is India's largest bourgeois party. At the 1952 parliamentary elections it won the majority of seats and formed a Government of the Indian Republic and the governments of all the states. The Congress also came out top in most of the constituencies during the 1957 elections.

Nehru and his following have proposed reforms in agriculture and support the idea of creating a heavy industry, first and foremost in the state sector. The railways, internal air lines, various industrial enterprises and the insurance business have been nationalised in India and the zamindari system of large landownership has been abolished.

The ruling party is trying to develop the basic industries according to plan. The year 1956 saw the completion of the first five-year plan. The second is now nearing completion and a third five-year plan is being elaborated. Even under the social conditions existing in India all these measures undoubtedly contribute to the development of industry and agriculture.

Under the influence of the tremendous progress achieved in the countries of socialism and the spread of socialist ideas, the Congress has set before itself the task of building in India a "socialistic structure of society".

We Soviet journalists studied the subject from literature and closely observed life in an effort to understand what was meant by this oft-repeated phrase "socialistic structure of society". Judging by what the Congress Party's theorists sometimes claim for it, their idea of "a society of a socialistic type" is rather vague and contradictory. On the one hand we are told that a society without classes has to be built up; on the other, that private ownership of the means of production is to be preserved. This means a further splitting up of society into classes, the exploitation of one by another, the preservation of capitalism.



"What will tomorrow's India be like, I cannot say," stated Nehru. "I can only express my hopes, and wishes. Naturally, I want India to advance on the material plane, to fulfil her five-year plans, to raise the standards of living of her vast population; I want the narrow conflicts of today in the name of religion or caste, language or province, to cease, and a classless and casteless society to be built up where every individual has full opportunity to grow according to his worth and ability. In particular, I hope that the curse of caste will be ended, for there cannot be either democracy or socialism on the basis of caste."

These hopes and wishes are not bad. But how will they be fulfilled? Apparently, the ways which their country's social development will take, occupy the minds of all thinking people in India. They cannot help seeing the class narrowness and inconsistency of the Congress Party's home policy, a fact which its own leaders and the Indian press have often pointed out. There are certain factors, however, which should not be overlooked. India has won her political independence only quite recently; the grim legacy of colonialism is making itself felt at every step; foreign capital, especially British, still dominates the Indian economic scene. Another important factor is the motley composition of the Congress itself.

So long as it was a matter of open struggle against the colonialists to achieve a common goal—national independence—the various sections of the Indian people often acted in concert, their inner class contradictions sometimes receding into the background. At that time the Congress, to a certain extent, expressed the nation's hopes. It meets with general support today as well, when it is a question of defending the national interests. We all know, for example, that the moves of Nehru's Government for peace and international co-operation have the support of the vast majority of Indians. But on a number of problems—we have in mind, above all, social problems—this unanimity

no longer exists. It obviously cannot in an antagonistic class society.

The class antagonisms between the various social groups are becoming more strongly pronounced than ever. The aims they pursue differ as well.

The question arises: is this not a reason why, side by side with certain positive measures aimed at developing the economy and liquidating the colonial legacy, other features are revealed in the activity of the Congress which show that many of the reforms proclaimed by that party hang fire and are far from having been implemented?

We see among others in Parliament representatives of the Communist Party of India, whose programme and policy, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, are in the best national interests of the Indian people. It is the second largest party in the country. Its splendid career is replete with unforgettable examples of staunch struggle for the interests of the working people, for India's freedom and happiness. The Communists were in the front ranks of the heroic strikers of Calcutta and Bombay. They were the guiding spirit behind many a protest and revolt against the hateful British rule. It is to the courageous struggle of their Party that the Communists of India owe the prestige which they enjoy among the people of India. At the elections to Parliament and the legislative assemblies of the states the Communist Party came second after the Congress in the number of votes cast for it and the number of mandates which it received.

The Communist Party supports the policy of Panch Shila which Nehru is pursuing, the policy of peaceful coexistence. It supports the progressive measures of the National Congress in the field of home policy—the development of the state sector, nationalisation, etc. At the same time the Communist Party stands for a more consistent and vigorous enforcement of the agrarian reform, it demands that the peasants should be relieved of the heavy burden of rents, taxes, and debts, that prices should be controlled,



that wage and salaried workers should receive better pay, and that the system of education and the health services should be improved.

To increase the resources necessary for the country's development and for building up a powerful state sector, the Communist Party of India demands the nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, coal mining, the aluminium industry, manganese, copper, iron and gold mining, of the British-controlled jute mills, as well as the tea and coffee plantations. It urges the restriction of exportable profits, the introduction of a state monopoly on foreign trade in staples, a more vigorous reorganisation of agriculture and the adoption of more effective measures for raising the standard of living.

Its policy aimed at defending the interests of the working masses against the encroachments of capital is winning the Communist Party growing support among the electorate, who approve its programme. During the 1957 elections it won a victory in the state of Kerala, and its representatives headed the local government. The new government of the state of Kerala inaugurated within the framework of the Constitution a number of reforms, which were opposed by reactionary forces. The Right parties' bloc, and Catholic reaction provoked disturbances in the state which caused the President to dissolve its legislative assembly and announce new elections. At these elections the Communist Party won more votes than it did at the previous elections, but owing to the existing electoral system the majority of seats in the legislative assembly went to the bloc of other parties.

The Praja Socialist Party comes third in the Indian Parliament. Its ideology is close to the Right-wing Social-Democratic parties of the West; vague promises to the people go hand in hand with openly reactionary deeds. Some of its leaders take a very peculiar stand. Whenever the forces of imperialist reaction start their attacks against the socialist countries, against the forces of peace—wheth-

er in Europe, Asia or in India herself—they can always count on the support of the leaders of the Praja Socialist Party.

Unlike the Communist Party, whose criticism of the government is of a constructive kind aimed at defending the interests of the working people, that of the Praja Socialist Party is sheer demagoguery pursuing extremely selfish aims. Very often this party comes out with statements which are designed to denigrate the most authoritative leaders of the Congress.

We were often told in Delhi, as well as in other cities, that the Praja Socialists were steadily losing ground.

Another party, the Jan Sangh, represented in Parliament by a few deputies is that of religious communal reactionaries. This party stands for the inviolability of caste barriers, for preferential treatment of Hindus compared with people of other religions, and is opposed to all parties who put forward such slogans as equality among people irrespective of caste.

And lastly, a new party that has recently emerged on the political scene is the Swatantra Party. Its leaders are closely connected with monopolist circles. It is backed by Big Capital, the landlords and the feudal lords (this party is said in India to have outside backing on the part of those in the West who dislike the present policy of the republic).

The name of this party, translated from Sanscrit, means "party of freedom". What freedom, and for whom, is this party fighting for after ten years of Indian independence? An answer to this question can be found in the pamphlet *American Policy Towards India* by the well-known Indian publicist Venkataraman.

"Taking the political parties first," he writes, "it is widely believed that in the recently formed Swatantra Party, the hard core of India's American patriots exists. It does not require much effort to show that their essential approach to Indian problems is to protect vested interests in land and industry. Whether it be the programme of Co-



operative Farming or of heavy industries or of expansion of public sector or even of State Trading, it is the Swatantra Party's policy to oppose them tooth and nail and to propagate a return to the traditional structure of capitalism and even feudalism. In fact, those Indian parties who have a pronounced sympathy for the United States of America have also a pronounced sympathy for undoing the major progressive policies of the present Government of India...."

"Those who support America," Venkataraman continues, "do so in the hope that America will save all that is reactionary and inequitable in the present Indian social set up. It is very interesting in this connection to note that even a party which calls itself Socialist, namely, P.S.P., has been retreating fast from its socialism since its sympathy for the U.S.A. became pronounced. Likewise, the other political parties of the Right in India believe in supporting America externally and capitalism internally. Perhaps, (it would be conceded by all that) this reflects a degree of mutual trust between the United States of America and the Right wing in Indian politics.... In brief, one might say that the United States of America today is aligned in Indian politics...."

To be sure, the Right-wing Socialists or Swatantrists do not speak aloud about their seeking new masters for India overseas, or that they stand for war and the arms race. They do it in a veiled form. Here is one of the methods they use.

Shortly after the parliamentary debates, in which the leaders of the Right-wing Socialists Asoka Mehta and Acharya Kripalani sharply attacked Nehru and demanded the resignation of Defence Minister Krishna Menon, a number of our party happened to be visiting a jute mill in Calcutta. The workers of this mill belong to a trade union with a P.S.P. leadership.

"What do you think of these speeches," we asked a group of workers.

"I don't agree with them," answered machinist Roy.

"Why not?"

"Well, you see," he went on, "I believe our reactionaries can't get over the military coup in Pakistan. They'd like to have an Ayub Khan of their own in India at the head of the army and establish a military dictatorship at the point of its bayonets. Krishna Menon is for peace and an independent policy. Obviously, he's not to their liking. So they want to get rid of him."

The other workers unanimously supported the opinion of their mate. The foreman of the spinning shop, Biswas added:

"If you ask me, it's not simply a struggle for power. You can't keep the power on home bayonets alone, you'd have to have foreign bayonets as well. And you can only get those if India is dragged into 'sipahi sangh' (military alliances). That's what the colonialists are dreaming about. And so you have them going to work through our reactionaries."

And so, reader, we have briefly introduced you to the major political parties of India and their policies. We are now acquainted with those who are sitting in Parliament. They are different kinds of people, representing different political views. We have mirrored here, as it were, the class, caste and religious stratification of modern Indian society.

### **"PANCH SHILA" IN ACTION**

Khrushchov appears in the doorway of the Central Hall of India's Parliament. The members of Parliament give the distinguished visitor a standing ovation. He is warmly greeted by men and women, veterans of the national-liberation movement who went through colonial jails, the underground, and years of hard struggle, and the political leaders of the young generation whose career started with the country's independence.

Nikita Khrushchov, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Vice-



President and Speaker of the Council of States, Radhakrishnan, and the Speaker of the House of the People, Aiyangar, cross to the rostrum of the Central Hall, amid continued applause.

An atmosphere of thrilled solemnity reigns in the hall. Radhakrishnan presses Khrushchov's hand, Aiyangar smiles, and Prime Minister Nehru joins in the general applause.

Khrushchov approaches the edge of the platform. His hands are pressed together in the traditional Indian salutation.

*"Namaste!"*

The applause grows louder. Shouts of *"Namaste, Khrushchov!"* can be heard in various parts of the hall.

Khrushchov first addressed the members of the Indian Parliament from this platform in 1955. His stirring speech was heard out with rapt attention and tumultuously applauded. For the first time in history a foreign statesman had spoken about India in such warm and friendly terms.

"We sincerely wish you," said Khrushchov in 1955, "to have a powerful home industry, that your country may develop science, culture and education, and that success and happiness may always attend the people of India. In saying this, we are guided by the immortal teachings of the great Lenin, who held that the people of every country are entitled to live as they wish, without interference by other countries in their affairs."

Khrushchov's words made big headlines in many Indian newspapers on the eve of his second visit on a mission of friendship.

What is the friendship between the two nations based upon? They have been drawn together by the ideals of peace. The Indian people hail the struggle for peace which the Soviet Union is waging, while the peace-loving policy pursued by Nehru's Government is respected by the Soviet people.

Ten years ago Soviet people read with satisfaction the words of India's first Constitution to the effect that its government would do its utmost to promote world peace and security. On the very first day that the Indian Government was formed its Prime Minister declared that it would pursue a policy of non-alignment, that it desired to establish friendly relations with all countries, that it would do its utmost to uphold the principle of freedom for the dependent countries and fight against colonialism. This declaration was given a hostile reception by aggressive circles in the West. In setting up military blocs and groupings, imperialist circles counted on drawing India into their aggressive alliances. India's foreign policy in the course of the last decade has upset all these plans.

Indian and world public opinion applauded India's peace moves in 1950 in connection with the war in Korea. This initiative, which was supported by the Soviet Government met with the resistance of aggressive circles in the U.S.A. Speaking in the parliamentary debates on foreign policy in June 1952, Nehru expressed concern at the fact that the United Nations was gradually becoming "a protector of colonialism". Referring to the activities of Syngman Rhee, Nehru said they "should make the United Nations and every country connected with it think of the undesirability of any kind of association with a person like President Rhee. To support the regime of President Rhee is to support the very things which the United Nations is supposed to stand against".

How prophetic these words sound today. The people of South Korea have risen against the bloody regime of Syngman Rhee, which was upheld by American bayonets. That puppet ruler has been overthrown, though the struggle of the South Korean people for freedom and independence is far from completed. And is it not characteristic that the overthrown dictator has fled the wrath of the people and sought safety beneath the wing of his American protectors and friends!



Let us remind the reader of certain other facts descriptive of India's stand in 1954. That year saw the signing of a military alliance between the U.S.A. and Pakistan.

In the pamphlet quoted above Venkataraman wrote:

"American military minds worked out the new policy of surrounding India, along with China and the U.S.S.R. with military bases.... Exasperation at the growing size and might of the socialist bloc and the consciousness that time was running fast led to the predominance of the Pentagon in the American approach to foreign policy.

"The first act which Indians should remember most was the extension of the military assistance to Pakistan and the inclusion of Pakistan in the broader defence strategy of the West.... It could provide useful air bases and a huge land army. It could also be the centre of American activities in Asia. What was more, however, was that Pakistan was also suited to play the role of a base against non-alignment and neutralism.... It was, however, not that America was genuinely interested in Pakistan getting Kashmir. The real interest was in getting Kashmir for America."

After India had rejected American military aid and demanded the withdrawal of United States military observers from Kashmir, the American press started personal attacks against Nehru. Provocative reports were sent in by the *New York Times* correspondent in India, Robert Trumbull, predicting the inevitable downfall of Nehru. In this connection the Indian bourgeois newspaper *The People* asked whether this was not a call to overthrow Nehru.

At the end of June 1954 Premier of the State Council of the Chinese People's Republic Chou En-lai visited India. His talks with Nehru ended in the signing of a declaration of principles upon which relations between India and China were to be founded. They were: respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual advantage; peaceful coexistence. These

five principles of peaceful coexistence—*Panch Shila*—subsequently won wide popularity and support among all peace-loving peoples and many governments.

Anxious not to allow international tension to become relaxed, the American imperialists hastily formed a military bloc for South-East Asia—SEATO. India promptly declined the invitation to attend the conference that was to inaugurate this bloc. Washington's invitation was turned down also by Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon and a number of other countries. Only three states joined SEATO—Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines, whose population is less than a tenth of the population of Asia.

With Indonesia and the Chinese People's Republic, India was a sponsor of the historic Bandung Conference of Asian and African countries in 1955. Shortly afterwards Prime Minister Nehru paid a visit of friendship to the Soviet Union. He visited Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, the new croplands, Sverdlovsk, and Magnitogorsk, and studied life in the Soviet Union.

In November of the same year a Soviet Government delegation paid a return visit to India. The warm reception it was given during this visit testified to the enduring strength of the principles of friendship and co-operation. Khrushchov's talks and speeches, in which he touched on many vital international issues, made a deep impression on the Indian people.

And now this good friend of the Indian people is on the parliamentary rostrum of India once more. Today, as four years ago, the joint session of the two Houses is opened by the Speaker of the Council of States, Vice-President of India, Radhakrishnan.

"The Soviet Union's achievements in science, technology and the art of engineering," he said, "are most impressive—supersonic aircraft, the splitting of the atom, and the science of rockets. But great achievements entail great responsibility. Strength and power should be accompanied by modesty and humanity."



"We were therefore delighted to know that the Soviet Prime Minister made a great and powerful address to the members of the U.N. General Assembly last September calling for multilateral disarmament by stages. He also addressed his own Parliament on the same subject on January 14. Like many others, he is aware that any conflict in this nuclear age will mean universal destruction. The important thing is to realise that the destinies of the various countries are inseparably linked."

Pointing out that India was prepared to co-operate with the Soviet Union, the Vice-President concluded his speech amid stormy applause:

"In industrial and cultural development and in the cause of strengthening peace, our tasks are identical with those of the Soviet Union. Inasmuch as we strive for the prosperity of society, for the freedom and dignity of the individual and for durable peace, the Soviet Premier and the people of the Soviet Union may rest assured that they will have our full co-operation. In the years ahead our relations will become more and more stable, and we can hope for a better world, a world without war."

Khrushchov begins his address amid tumultuous hand-clapping. Press photographers' flash-lights flicker like lightning, and the news-reel camera flood-lights are turned on. In the press gallery, where pressmen from all countries have gathered, a "battle" is in progress for the text of the Soviet leader's speech. Parliament and the people of India listen attentively to this speech.

"It is our firm conviction," says Khrushchov, "that the principles of peaceful coexistence should underlie the settlement of all outstanding international questions. This means that their settlement should be sought through negotiations conducted on a basis of equality and not through pressure and *diktat*...."

"In the near historical future," continues Khrushchov, "we can see a time when Asian states that only yesterday were in the position of oppressed colonies will enter the

ranks of the world's foremost countries with regard to the level of development of their national economy and culture. Like Prometheus unbound, the peoples of Asia are squaring their powerful shoulders as they embark on the building of a new life."

The hall applauds. The members of Parliament react in the liveliest manner to every word of Khrushchov's with cries of "*Ji han! Ji han!*" which means, "hear, hear!"

Khrushchov continues:

"More than four years ago, in a speech in Bombay during my first visit to India, I described Soviet-Indian relations as a model of peaceful coexistence and co-operation. I am very happy to reaffirm this today, at a time when life affords such striking examples of fruitful co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and India in their peaceful constructive activity for the benefit of our peoples, for the benefit of peace.

"The increased prestige of the Republic of India and of its leaders, the prestige of Prime Minister Nehru, springs from the policy of neutrality pursued by the Indian Government, from the policy of non-adherence to military blocs. In that lie wisdom and strength.

"Circumstances compelled the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to form a military alliance, known as the Warsaw Treaty, to counter-balance the aggressive military alliances of the imperialist countries," the head of the Soviet Government continued. "But we have repeatedly declared, and do so now, that we would be glad to do away with all military blocs because what they lead to is not friendship among peoples but an exacerbation of international relations."

This statement is greeted with a storm of applause.

"We welcome the policy of peace, the policy of non-participation in blocs, which India is pursuing.

"For our part, we are making every effort to ensure that the 'cold war' is ended, that an atmosphere of trust is created between states, that military blocs and all armies



and armed forces are abolished. We want genuine peace and friendship to set in among all the nations of the world.

"Both our countries are working for peace and against the 'cold war'. General and complete disarmament is the most radical means of preventing war, of doing away with the war danger. As you know, a plan for general and complete disarmament was submitted by the Soviet Union to the United Nations last September....

"A durable peace in conditions of general and complete disarmament," says Khrushchov, "would have a most beneficial effect on the life of all peoples of the world without exception. It would make it possible to use all the world's resources for a fuller satisfaction of the material and cultural needs of people and would open up tremendous opportunities for the all-round progress of mankind....

"According to estimates made by United Nations experts, the underdeveloped countries would have to invest \$14,000 million annually in their economies to bridge the gap between themselves and the foremost industrial powers in a short time, whereas the arms race swallows up about \$100,000 million annually. Surely it should be possible to set aside, from the \$100,000 million which in the event of general and complete disarmament will be wrested from the forces of destruction, \$15,000 million or even \$20,000 million in order to accomplish the historic task of delivering hundreds of millions of people from hunger and poverty!"

The members of Parliament greet every word of the head of the Soviet Government with thunderous applause, expressing their approval of the peaceful policy pursued by the Soviet Union, the policy of equality and friendship among the nations.

As Radhakrishnan expressed it, they were greeting Khrushchov not only as the head of the Soviet Government but as a courageous champion of world peace. Their feel-

ings found utterance in the speech of Aiyangar, the Speaker of the House of the People.

"I thank Mr. Khrushchov," he said, "for his brilliant speech and wish him long life to carry out his task of establishing lasting peace in the world."

Turning to Khrushchov, he said:

"The first time you came to us as a visitor. The second time as a friend. The third time you will be a kinsman! A challenging voice rang out from the platform of the United Nations. It was yours, proposing total and not partial disarmament. You have suited your action to the word by unilaterally reducing the Soviet armed forces. My desire and advice is that other countries should follow your example as quickly as possible."

In conclusion the Speaker, referring to the Soviet Union's achievements in space research, humorously remarked:

"We presume that you are our sputnik, travelling round the world on a mission of peace. We wish success to your mission!"

His words are cheered to the echo.

The Soviet visitors take their departure. Khrushchov is given a hearty send-off by the members of Parliament. The visitors' cars drive through the streets of the capital where thousands of Indians once more greet the head of the Soviet Government.

### ON A SOLID BASE

The serious discussion of vital international issues, initiated by the speech which the head of the Soviet Government made in the Indian Parliament, was continued the next morning, on February 12, when Khrushchov visited India's Prime Minister.

A friendly discussion was held on questions relating to the international situation and to the development of So-



viet-Indian relations. The heads of government of the Soviet Union and India agreed that a frank exchange of opinions was useful for the cause of peace and international co-operation. The talks between Khrushchov and Mr. Nehru were very important from the point of view of promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries.

Shortly afterwards Khrushchov paid a visit to the Vice-President of India Radhakrishnan. Here, as at all previous official receptions, the press photographers were at their busiest.

"The five principles plus a sixth—photographers unite the whole world!" the Vice-President said jokingly. His remark was greeted with laughter. But this was merely the prelude to an important subject.

"We are closely following your active foreign policy," said Radhakrishnan. "You are doing good work for the cause of peace. We were amazed at the long-suffering patience and humanity which you displayed in the United States."

Khrushchov thanked him for his kind words.

"Our people are very happy to see you," continued Radhakrishnan. "I listened attentively to your speech and then read it. You said that all people could be made happy by stopping the arms race...."

"Yes, we are convinced of that. The world's productive potentiality today is so great that if the arms race were stopped the nations' needs could be gratified," Khrushchov said in a tone of conviction.

"All nations?"

"Yes, all the nations of the world."

"I agree with you," the Vice-President said thoughtfully. "We mustn't lose hope for the future. We must go forward patiently. Everyone is aware of the danger involved in the arms race, which is fraught with the extinction of millions of people. There is a policy 'from positions of strength'. But there is also a strong policy, and that is not

the same thing. You are strong, and this gives you strength in the struggle for peace. You are against national enslavement, against economic oppression of the peoples, against race discrimination, and so are we. In this we are at one. The important thing as far as we are concerned is that you stand for humanism. Mankind today has a real chance to free everyone, feed everyone, and give everyone an education. The arms race is a result of countries being suspicious of one another. The main thing is to overcome suspicious human nature. We must have a sense of duty to the whole world. You showed great courage in going to the United States and then to the United Nations. You argued the case for complete disarmament. You know that the Indian district of Goa is still under foreign rule. We could liberate that district by force, but we reject the use of force in settling outstanding questions."

Radhakrishnan spoke about his sojourn in Moscow in the capacity of Indian Ambassador. He said:

"When I was in the Soviet Union I visited a Baptist Church, and saw the cathedrals in Kiev, as well as the mosques in Baku. I saw that the people in all these districts of the country were living together in a friendly way. In India there are many tongues, and many different religions. We are trying now, like you, to build up a multinational state."

Khrushchov mentioned a conversation he had with Mr. Lodge, the American statesman, who had repeatedly declared his hostility towards the Soviet Union, but who was nevertheless compelled to admit the tremendous successes achieved in that country.

"After visiting Baku and Tashkent, Lodge said: 'I was in Pakistan and other Asian countries. I know how people are living there. And now I've been to Baku and Tashkent. The people living on both sides of the frontier are very much alike, but their lives have nothing in common. The conditions of life in the Soviet Union are incomparable with those in Pakistan or Turkey—they are much better.'



We have built up a well-knit friendly state. Christians, Moslems, atheists—people of all beliefs living together in close co-operation.”

“You have reason to be pleased that even an American businessman like Lodge has drawn such conclusions after seeing the Asian part of the Soviet Union,” said the Vice-President. “On the other side of your country’s borders he saw squalor, disease, hunger, but in the Soviet Union he saw a prospering community and women without the veil, women like Madame Tairova, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister, who is present here. All this should give you satisfaction.”

“Yes, we are very pleased with the results we have achieved.”

“Iran and Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey—why, they are different worlds! There is not the slightest doubt about that,” the Vice-President proceeded. “Outside the Soviet Union Asians are living very badly. They want to eat, but go hungry, and their other wants remain unsatisfied. They should be fed, they should be educated. Unless a man is educated you cannot awaken his mind.... A good deal still remains to be done to free the enslaved countries, to do away with racial discrimination, and satisfy the needs of the people.”

“Certainly,” Khrushchov concurred.

“We must work towards that,” said Radhakrishnan.

“We are at one with you in that!”

“India now is very near to the Soviet Union. You can have your breakfast in Moscow and your supper in Delhi on the same day,” Khrushchov said towards the end of the talk.

“Yes, you can fly to us from the Soviet Union in four and a half to five hours,” said Radhakrishnan. “There are now supersonic planes. Man wants to reach the moon, reach out towards the stars—he has gained stature. Man today is working out his own destiny. The greatest power is that of the human spirit, which is performing miracles. With the existing level of knowledge we could make the

world a paradise. But first of all we must produce four times more food to feed India."

During Khrushchov's talks with India's leading statesmen the main lines of co-operation were mapped out on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence, and these lines were embodied in the subsequent Soviet-Indian documents.

The signing of the Soviet-Indian economic and cultural agreements took place after noonday on February 12 at the residence of India's Prime Minister.

We are in the residence of Prime Minister Nehru. The bustling press photographers are making preparations for the solemn moment. On the table lie two folders—a red one and a green one. The red one has the state emblem of the Soviet Union on it, the green one has the Indian national emblem—the three lions. These coloured folders contain a good deal: the construction of the second stage of the Bhilai Works, the new shops of other plants and electric stations, oil prospecting and extraction in Cambay, and new closer ties between the scientific, technical, cultural and sports institutions of the Soviet Union and India, as well as mutual visits by scientists and art workers, the expansion of tourism, the translation of the works of literature of both countries, the exchange of books, the organisation of scientific and art exhibitions, the showing of films, and the exchange of radio and television programmes. The folders contain a broad programme of the work to be done in the immediate future in the fields of economic and cultural collaboration between the Soviet Union and India.

Khrushchov and Mr. Nehru enter the hall. Their presence at the signing ceremony emphasises the importance of the event. Khrushchov and Nehru and the Soviet and Indian officers who signed the agreements shake hands heartily.

The journalists hasten to report this new important event in the development of friendly Soviet-Indian relations. A few hours later the newspapers in Delhi, Calcutta



and Bombay will carry reports of what took place at the residence of India's Prime Minister, and new articles, and comments will be added to the hundreds of newspaper reports concerning the visit of Khrushchov.

Meanwhile, let us see what the newspapers have to say about Khrushchov's speech in the Indian Parliament the day before.

One of India's most popular newspapers *The National Herald*, published by Chalapathi Rau, who accompanied the Indian Prime Minister during his visit to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1955, carried a drawing showing Khrushchov in 1955 planting a young tree, next to which was the inscription "Soviet-Indian friendship", and another drawing showing Khrushchov in 1960 standing next to the towering tree which was in rich blossom.

Hundreds of newspapers published in different languages in the most remote corners of the country carried the full text of Khrushchov's speech under streamer headlines right across the front pages:

KHRUSHCHOV REJECTS PRESSURE TACTICS

KHRUSHCHOV'S PLEA: SCRAP MILITARY  
ALLIANCES

POSITIONS OF INDIA AND RUSSIA COINCIDE  
IN STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

SOVIET PREMIER CALLS FOR END TO  
"COLD WAR"

CHALLENGE TO WEST TO CUT ARMED FORCES

INDO-SOVIET AMITY VITAL FOR PEACE

APPEAL FOR TOTAL DISARMAMENT

INDIA AND RUSSIA GOOD NEIGHBOURS,  
GREAT FRIENDS!

And this is what the newspapers wrote:

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*: "The Soviet Prime Minister's ad-

dress to the Indian Parliament is inspiring not only because it reveals objectives which this country fully shares but also because of the striking similarity of views it embodies on problems of world peace. India's growing friendship with the Soviet Union, which Mr. Khrushchov repeatedly emphasised, has, therefore, a solid base. A genuine understanding on the basis of common ideals can forge a stronger tie between countries than formal pacts and military alliances which only tend to create tension and suspicion all over the world."

*The Leader:* "The present visit should further strengthen Indo-Soviet friendship.... The Soviet Union has made so much progress, scientific and economic, that if the world is freed from the fear of war and the Soviet Union is able to use her resources and knowledge for peaceful purposes she can contribute considerably to the prosperity and happiness of not only her own people but the people of other countries also."

*Northern India Patrika:* "Indo-Soviet relationship rests today on sound foundations.... In her struggle for a better life, India finds in the Soviet Union a sincere friend and benefactor, helping her in many ways to step up her industrial and economic progress. Among other things, the Soviet Prime Minister referred, in the course of his address to Parliament, to the Bhilai Plant in particular. It was the symbol of Indo-Soviet friendship, he said, and he was right."

*Tribune:* "Mr. Khrushchov's address is also notable for its clear recognition that Asia and Africa are no longer on the periphery of the world and that a stable world order can only be built up if imperialism, racial inequality and economic backwardness in these regions are liquidated. The Soviet Premier has rightly pointed out that many Western countries owe their prosperity to the exploitation to which they subjected the peoples of Asia and Africa and that it is their moral duty to help them achieve economic progress. The Soviet Union has consistently supported the Asian and African struggle for independence



and racial equality. She is now making a vital contribution to the economic development of underdeveloped regions. The people of this country are grateful to her."

Unfortunately, there are certain Indian papers which do not express people's interests and aspirations in the same full and sincere manner. Even some of the newspapers from which we have quoted above have no scruples about publishing articles which distort the facts. There are newspapers in India which make a practice of smear campaigns against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

Newspapers usually sell quickly in India. But you can always buy the flyblown organs of Indian reaction, such as *Current*, *Thought*, *Flame* and others. The public refuses to read them. But they exist, they work mischief, they sabotage the progressive undertakings of the Indian Government. And someone gives them the money to do it with.

Take that gutter-press sheet *Flame*. For whom does it shed light? We bought the paper at a small railway station on our train journey from Delhi to Calcutta to meet Khrushchov, who was returning from his trip to Indonesia. It is in out-of-the-way places like this, which are often beyond the reach of newspapers and radio news reports, that the Indian reactionaries try to catch simpletons with the tainted bait of their propaganda. What does this so-called organ of the press, financed by the Swatantra Party, write about?

It boosts the proposal of Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan, for a military pact with India which would bring that country under the umbrella of the aggressive military blocs. Is that proposal in the national interests of India? Every Indian will answer emphatically and without hesitation: "No!"

*Flame* abuses the Government of India for collaborating with the Soviet Union and tries to justify the machinations of the Western monopolies in India which operate behind the screen of "aid".

The paper is full of articles packed with slanderous anti-Chinese propaganda and vicious attacks against the patriotic wing of the Indian National Congress. It sings the praises of the Swatantra Party and its capitalist ideals, and advocates theories, now current in the West, which are a rehash of the old dog-eat-dog philosophy.

Reading the *Flame*, one begins to see clearly where it got its name from. It is an inflammatory sheet. But playing with fire is a dangerous game. The Indian people reject this kind of game. Anyone who has been in India will have seen that for himself.

### RAMLILA GROUNDS LISTENS

The *Ramayana*, India's ancient epic, tells the story of how the hero Rama fought and conquered the demon king Ravana. Every year a pageant is held on Ramlila Grounds named after Rama, in which the struggle between the powers of good and evil are depicted.

"I don't know to what extent the *Ramayana* legend is history," said Prime Minister Nehru, "but a theme that captivates men's hearts is greater than history, because history belongs to the past whereas memory lives for ever."

Khrushchov's meeting with the people of Delhi on Ramlila Grounds was an event that captivated people's hearts.

The people looked forward eagerly to this memorable meeting with the head of the Soviet Government. They wanted to be told not about trivialities, but about the things that really mattered—about life, freedom, the truth. And they wanted it to be told simply and clearly, they wanted these noble ideas and sentiments to be linked with the one or two hard-earned rupees which the weaver or the carpenter received that day or the day before, with the handful of rice in the poor man's dwelling left over uneaten for that night's supper, with the patch of land the Indian peasant is scratching with his primitive wooden plough.



And such a meeting took place in Delhi.

Ramlila Grounds is a vast sandy common on the borderline of the old and new towns. Here two epochs meet, as it were. The old town looks out upon the common with the blinking little windows of its squalid hovels, while New Delhi stretches its avenues towards it like broad bands of light.

Almost facing the Delhi gates is a massive stand with a light golden arch over it.

There is a saying "spread the carpet underfoot" in reference to special solemn or festive occasions. On this occasion the citizens of Delhi actually spread carpets all over the vast square, and decorated the stand with fabrics and flowers.

A sea of humanity flooded the square. Here are members of Parliament, public figures and statesmen, diplomats, workers, clerks, peasants, tradesmen—those usually referred to in newspaper reports as the "man in the street".

Khrushchov and Nehru ascend the stand. Hundreds of thousands of people wave red and tri-coloured flags above their heads, clap their hands and shout words of greeting. Khrushchov presses his hands together above his head in a symbolic friendly handshake. The gesture is hailed with loud cheers. Khrushchov surveys the vast multitude with eyes screwed up against the sun, which is dipping towards the horizon.

People have filled not only the square but all the adjoining streets; they have climbed to the roofs of the houses and sit in tree tops. And all eyes gaze with hope and agitation at the leader of the great friendly country, the man whose word weighs so much and means so much, the man in whom the peoples of Asia see their sincere friend.

The Mayor of the city, Trilok Chand, places a garland of flowers round Khrushchov's neck. A female choir performs a song of greeting. Trilok Chand reads out a salutatory address to Khrushchov on behalf of the citizens of Delhi.

"Today we again greet Your Excellency, not only as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, but also as a man profoundly influencing the course of contemporary world history."

A mighty wave of applause sweeps the huge square, red and tri-coloured flags fly into the air as if raised by a powerful gust of wind as Khrushchov walks up to the microphone. He conveys to the citizens of the Indian capital the hearty greetings of Muscovites, and says:

"It is a pleasure to note that the friendship between our countries has grown stronger still in the four years since my first visit to your hospitable country. This is only natural. The common interest we have in the struggle for a lofty cause—consolidation of world peace and promotion of co-operation among states in accordance with the principles of peaceful coexistence—is a great force cementing the friendship between our two nations. We want war to be for ever eliminated from the life of human society."

These words are greeted with tumultuous applause from the vast audience, including the Mayor of the City, Prime Minister Nehru, the guests and journalists.

Khrushchov continues, addressing the crowd that fills Ramlila Grounds:

"Following the behests of the great Lenin, the Soviet state has from the very first day of its existence invariably advocated peace and friendship among nations. Our enemies wanted to strangle the Soviet state in its cradle, to deprive our people of the freedom and independence they had won. Time and again Soviet people had to break off their peaceful work and take up arms to defend their country against aggression. But even when we were fighting, our battle standards had 'Peace to the Peoples' inscribed on them."

The people lend an attentive ear to these words. Thousands of hearts on Ramlila Grounds, millions of hearts throughout the world, are eager to learn what miraculous



power gave the Soviet Union the strength to shake off the "mortal grip" of the early interventions, to hold its own against famine and chaos, to spread the iron wings of its first five-year plans, to crush the Nazi hordes. Millions of people in different countries ask themselves the same question: What is he like, this Soviet man?

Facing the Indian people on the platform stands the envoy of the Soviet Union. His strength lies in truth and humanity. Nikita Khrushchov speaks about the Soviet Union's consistent policy of peace, and says that "our people greatly appreciate the major contribution the Republic of India is making to peace and peaceful coexistence...."

He warns those who dream of starting another war:

"Unfortunately, there are still people in the world, and quite influential ones too, who are against relaxation of international tension. While all peace-loving peoples want further relaxation of world tension, the proponents of 'cold' and 'hot' war continue to step up the activities of aggressive blocs, such as NATO, SEATO, and CENTO. They are still trying to drag the 'cold war' donkey on to the roof of their house, without realising that it may fall through and cause damage to the owners themselves."

Khrushchov is good at ridiculing stupidity, and he found a responsive audience in the Indian people. There is a pithy saying in India about the obstinate tree stump which self-confidently declares: "You say I don't budge. But then I don't stumble." Not only a heedless man but a heedless nation may stumble over such a stump of the "cold war". Stumps, as we know, simply have to be rooted out if we really want to build anything on this earth. You can't do any good by hopping from mound to stump and back again like a timorous hare. You can't build anything good among rotten and gnarled stumps with tenacious roots going deep into the ground.

The thousands of people listening to Khrushchov asked themselves: what should be done to clear the ground of

vile provocations and espionage, which ridiculously try to masquerade as chivalry? How can the ground be cleared for a genuine human, industrious, courageous and noble life?

Khrushchov offers a solution which everyone understands:

"The Soviet Union considers that general and complete disarmament is the main prerequisite for ensuring peace and peaceful coexistence on earth.... It is not at all because our country is weak militarily that the Soviet Government has made its disarmament proposal. That is not it—we submitted our proposal at a time when the Soviet Union had achieved outstanding successes in the development of nuclear weapons and rockets. The Soviet Union is now the strongest military power in the world. But we do not want to profit by this advantage. We are prepared to destroy all our weapons at any moment, provided the Western Powers do the same."

Khrushchov tells the Indian people how the idea of disarmament is now being realised in the Soviet Union:

"To prove by deed that it desires disarmament and to make conditions for the acceptance of its proposals still more favourable, the Soviet Union recently adopted an important and concrete decision on a further unilateral reduction of its armed forces by 1,200,000 men, that is, by one-third. This peaceful act of the Soviet Union is approved by all nations. It stimulates other states to approach the disarmament problem just as concretely, and we hope they will follow our example."

Did these figures sound convincing to the American journalist, our colleague in a manner of speaking, who was standing next to us? We asked him. Yes, they were!

"Can we refer to your 'yes' in our reports?"

No, we could not. But here is his exact answer in full:

"You'd better not. I'd rather you didn't, you know. Disarmament is such a difficult question...."



Khrushchov's words are convincing to him. But it is not a thing he would care to write to his paper about. And he doesn't want to have his name connected with disarmament questions—"it's such a difficult question, you know".

The correspondent of the New York paper did not know then, on February 12, 1960, that the hypocrisy of the White House would shortly be exposed to the world, that public opinion everywhere would clearly see the "difficulty" of President Eisenhower's position, who not only uttered fine words about his love of peace and played golf, but at the same time signed orders to have military spy planes sent to the Soviet Union and other countries, and then, throwing off the mask, admitted in face of the whole world that these aggressive espionage actions were the U.S.A.'s official foreign policy.

Khrushchov said:

"Soviet people are working to advance their national economy, science and culture. Our country has undergone a complete transformation in slightly more than twenty years (I am not counting the years of war and of the economic rehabilitation following it). We have turned backward Russia into a leading great power with highly developed industry and agriculture, into a country with the highest level of education, science and culture. In industry the Soviet Union now produces as much in nine days as pre-revolutionary Russia did in a year.

"The Soviet people have now set out to surpass the United States within the next few years and to advance to first place in the world in per capita output. That will enable us to achieve the highest living standard in the world with the shortest working day. . . .

"As competition rules require it, we have informed the United States of our challenge. We have said to it: Let us compete not in making weapons but in developing a peaceful economy. Our nations, and the other nations of the world, will benefit greatly by it.

"We are not afraid of this competition and are certain that we shall win. Figuratively speaking, our socialist horse is full of vim; it has clearly demonstrated its excellent qualities to the world. As for the capitalist horse carrying the United States, well, as they say, 'it was a fine horse, but it's worn out' and is getting lame on four legs. In the past six years per capita industrial output has increased 71 per cent in the Soviet Union and hardly at all in the United States. Such are the facts and there is no escaping them."

Simply and calmly the head of the Soviet Government told how the millions of Soviet people were building the material foundations of the new epoch, and spoke about our plans for the future.

"We are proud that our science serves the cause of peace and progress," he said from the platform on Ramlila Grounds, "that Soviet scientists, engineers and workers have succeeded in creating and launching the first artificial earth satellites in the world. Our space rocket has delivered a Soviet pennant to the moon."

Not all the Indian citizens by far, who surrounded us on Ramlila Grounds, are able to read the newspapers or listen regularly to the radio. But the beginning of the new epoch, like the beginning of a new day, is not only reflected in newspaper columns. Everything around us—now even the shining moon—reminds one of free man's unbelievably daring conceptions and his courageous ability to embody them in deeds.

"Dear friends," Khrushchov said, concluding his speech, "the extensive development of friendly political, economic and cultural ties between the Soviet Union and the Republic of India, despite the existing differences in the social systems of our states, once more shows the world that it is possible for all countries to co-operate fruitfully and to mutual benefit. Our friendship is based on a common struggle for a durable peace."



As a token of friendship Khrushchov presents to Prime Minister Nehru a replica of the pennant which the Soviet spaceship delivered to the moon.

"I present this pennant as a symbol of progress of human science, as a symbol of friendship between our countries, which grows from day to day to the joy of the peoples of the Soviet Union and India, for the happiness of all people on earth who want peace and prosperity."

In his answering speech, Mr. Nehru said, addressing the vast throng before him:

"What you are doing now in this square is becoming part of the history of our time. . . . The opportunities opening up before the city of Delhi and its citizens allow us to look into a new world, a new world that has its problems, its complications and conflicts, but one in which, as Mr. Khrushchov has said, sunrays are breaking through dark clouds. These rays show us a new, peaceful globe, co-operation and goodwill among the nations, and opportunities for progress for each country. Countries like ours are fighting to break out of the old shell, smash the fetters of poverty and ensure an acceptable living standard for 400,000,000 people. It is good, therefore, that we can look into this world and see how progress is achieved. We have before us the examples of other countries and among them the outstanding example of the Soviet Union.

"Mr. Khrushchov has given us this symbol—a replica of the pennant they have sent to the moon with their message. You see from afar the replica that has been presented to me. The pennant that landed on the moon, probably, broke into pieces and vaporised. We should reflect why this phenomenon has become the symbol of a new era, the symbol of a new history that brings science to the world."

Mr. Nehru continued:

"Peace, of course, is a good thing. Wars exhaust people's energy. . . ."

Events soon showed who was dreaming of another war and preparing it.

Later, on June 5, 1960, at the closing session of the National Congress All-India Committee in Poona, Mr. Nehru stated that the sending of the American spy plane U-2 into the Soviet Union's air space was a gross violation of international law and that the U.S.A. was to blame for it.

With regard to the actions of the American ruling circles, which led to the torpedoing of the summit conference, Mr. Nehru said that the attempts of the United States to justify its acts of espionage against the Soviet Union, and the statements made by U.S. satesmen to the effect that these acts of espionage against the U.S.S.R. would continue, were a turning point in the history of the summit conference's failure.

Yes, at that time, in Ramlila Grounds, one believed that events would take a different turn, although no one had any illusions about the imperialists. Their ways had not changed, and they were all too familiar. But the times had changed, though. And people believed and still believe in the ultimate triumph of reason.

The great square could not hold all the people who had come pouring into it that day.

Several of us Soviet newspapermen were sitting in Fatekh Singh's tiny tea-room in a small square of Old Delhi. Loudspeakers had been installed in Ramlila Grounds, but here, in Old Delhi, among the huddle of hut dwellings and shops, among the trays of the street vendors no loudspeakers were to be seen, for the simple reason that there weren't any. But Fatekh Singh's tea-room happened to have a receiving set. And it was to that set that it owed its sudden popularity. Fatekh Singh had made it known the day before that anyone who wished to hear Khrushchov's speech could come and stand outside his tea-room. Five o'clock in the afternoon found a crowd gathered on the corner of the square. They were residents of Old Delhi—mostly poor people.

Many faces in the crowd expressed pride: after all, it



was to them, the people, that the distinguished Soviet visitor was addressing himself.

Textile worker Shri Ram, who had been working for many years on the mill's trade union committee, said:

"My father and grandfather used to come every year to Ramlila Grounds in September during the Indian festival of Dussera. To this day scenes from our great old book the *Ramayana* are enacted there. Three huge effigies of the demons are burnt on the square every year. They are stuffed with gunpowder and set alight. They fall to pieces with a terrific crash and burn up. Good triumphs over evil. I looked at it myself many a time and rejoiced. And now, listening to Premier Khrushchov's speech I rejoiced still more."

Yes, good triumphs over evil. Even if, testing time which no longer works for them, the American imperialists dare to embark on dangerous adventures, they will meet with a crushing, annihilating rebuff.

Good triumphs over evil. And when mankind wins lasting peace, when swords will have been made into ploughshares, and when no A-bombs, H-bombs, or any other kind of bombs will be exploded, India will be allowed to go on using gunpowder for stuffing those demon dummies which are burnt on Ramlila Grounds to symbolise the triumph of good over evil....

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On the evening of February 12 a string of cars race down the shady avenues towards Ashoka Hotel in the new quarter of New Delhi, which only recently was a patch of wasteland.

This hotel is one of the city's new buildings. It was erected three years ago by the hands of Indian craftsmen, and combines the native elements of Indian architecture with modern town-building techniques. The hotel has spacious air-conditioned rooms which are kept cool during the most insufferable heat.

The endless motorcade stretches to the arched entrance of the hotel, halts, then moves on again. Women in brilliant gold-spun saris, men in black long-skirted jackets and white churida—tight-fitting trousers—step out of the cars, followed by men in dinner-jackets and people wearing national costumes of different countries. They are diplomats and guests.

Strapping young Sikh door-keepers with bushy beards, clad in scarlet uniforms and vivid golden turbans, usher the guests in. The religion of the Sikhs does not allow them to cut their hair; their beards and moustaches grow long and are skilfully braided and concealed at the back of the head.

The guests enter the spacious lobby. Arrow signs bear the inscription: "Reception by Soviet Ambassador in India I. A. Benediktov in honour of Prime Minister N. S. Khrushchov—second floor." The Soviet diplomats meet the guests and exchange friendly remarks. Many are closely acquainted.

Khrushchov, President of the Republic Prasad, Nehru, and Vice-President of the Republic Radhakrishnan enter the banqueting hall, which is filled with a gay murmuring crowd. The solemn strains of the national anthems of the Soviet Union and the Republic of India ring out beneath the lofty roof of the hall.

The guests—Indian ministers and officers of state, public leaders, generals, writers and journalists—surround Khrushchov, greet him, ask him questions, and express their warm feelings. Khrushchov amiably greets acquaintances and chats with them. Good-humoured jokes can be heard, sometimes a sharp remark addressed to those who deserve it. Nehru is surrounded by journalists. From time to time the heads of government succeed in finding a secluded spot where they can sit together to have another chat and exchange views on various subjects.

Official receptions are usually described laconically as having "taken place in a warm friendly atmosphere". But



how many cordial conversations, friendly meetings, life-time acquaintances are made under cover of that stock phrase.

The reception at the Ashoka Hotel which may perhaps seem a mere incident against the back-cloth of giant mass meetings which Khrushchov had with the Indian people, contributed its share towards strengthening friendship between the Soviet and Indian peoples.

We lived in the Ashoka Hotel. The proximity of the desert made itself felt: at night we could hear the jackals howling.

"Where do they come from?" we once asked.

"Well, you see," an Indian answered, "until recently the jackals had the run of this place. Once in a while they come back here for old time's sake to howl at the moon."

This howling of the jackals somehow reminded one of the attempts the imperialists were making to frighten the peoples of the East, to throw them back to the old days of slavery.

But no matter how much the jackals howl at the moon, the wasteland is no more, and even the moon is not what it was! And if few people, perhaps, think of this on ordinary days, there is hardly a person, however illiterate, who today, at his meeting with Khrushchov, does not remember that the moon shining over the Indian capital has the Moscow Sea, the Dream Sea, and the Soviet Mountain upon it. The pennant of the Soviet Union is also there!

## THE WAYS OF THE INDIAN COUNTRYSIDE

### AT THE WALLS OF PURANA QUILA

The walls of the ancient Delhi fort of Purana Quila (Old Fort) witnessed many events, joyous and tragic, during their long history.

Built in the 16th century, Purana Quila passed many times from hand to hand. Despotic emperors carved the destinies of the country there, and sat in judgment over the people. Brilliant poets, singers and musicians displayed their art there. The gallant rebel forces laid down their lives near this fort in 1857 in unequal battle with the troops of the colonialists. The fortress walls are scarred with the indelible marks of foreign enslavers' cannon balls and bullets.

Rivers of blood flowed at Purana Quila, where many Moslems used to live, during the savage massacre of the Hindus and Moslems provoked by the colonialists on the eve of the country's partition into India and Pakistan. And after the country was divided, thousands of homeless, destitute people, fugitives from Pakistan, moved into the barracks and hovels inside the fort, lived in the niches and gaps in the wall.

For years Purana Quila was neglected. The dense thickets of the jungle crept upon it, covering all traces of



the past beneath a grey-green carpet. But there came a time when the jungle retreated. A picturesque town sprang up around the walls of the fort—the pavilions for international and Indian exhibitions.

The new town is now being used as a world agriculture fair. Illuminated advertising posters and pavilion signs throw their gay, rippling and twinkling reflections into the sky. A flaming space rocket rushes skyward. A fantail of glimmering lights imitates its flight into starry space. Anyone can guess unerringly that this is the pavilion of the Soviet Union. No other country in the world had grounds for making a space rocket the symbol of its pavilion.

The avenues of the exhibition are filled with crowds, waiting for the head of the Soviet Government to arrive. Amid applause, flowers are thrown at Khrushchov's open car, which is surrounded by an escort of honour. Its occupant responds warmly to the greeting.

We journalists accompanying the Chairman of the Council of Ministers during his trip never ceased to wonder at his unflagging energy. On his first day in Delhi, after numerous tiring meetings, talks, and speeches in Parliament, Khrushchov was as brisk and buoyant, as attentive and cheerful as ever. Now he had come to see this big exhibition, and after that there would be more speeches and talks with India's statesmen.

Khrushchov is met by Prime Minister Nehru, the Minister of Agriculture, P. S. Deshmukh, and representatives of the Exhibition administration and the local community. The Minister, who is also the Chairman of the Exhibition's Organising Committee, greets the distinguished visitor and places a garland round his neck—not the customary garland of flowers, but a work of art created by the famous artist Venugopal in the form of gold and silver lacework skilfully entwined with stalks of rice and spices—clove and cardamom. As a token of profound respect for the visitor the garland is smeared with sandalwood oil, which keeps its strong aroma for a long time.

In less than a minute this rich garland disappears beneath more modest but none the less lovingly prepared garlands of rose petals, saffron and other flowers. The garland is the Indian "bread and salt", a mark of hospitality and welcome to an honoured guest.

Khrushchov and Mr. Nehru begin their inspection of the Exhibition. They stop before a man-made lake. There, upon an islet, a group of girls is performing a native marriage ceremony dance.

"These are not professional dancers," says Mr. Nehru. "They are peasant girls from Rajasthan."

The girls perform a dance with lighted lamps in their hands and on their heads. Light, the lamp, is the chief part of the Hindu marriage ceremony. The young couple must walk round the light several times before the marriage is considered contracted. The more light there is at a wedding the brighter and happier will be the life of the young couple, runs the popular belief. This custom is venerated by the Indians. The dance with the lights therefore enjoys great popularity at Indian weddings.

The girls with the lamps are followed by dancers in resplendent saris. Their faces are covered with filmy veils, their arms and necks are adorned with bracelets, beads, and necklaces, and their feet with belled anklets. Bright ornaments, even if cheap, are not only worn as costume jewellery. They are a sign that their wearer is a married woman. Upon the death of her husband a woman is obliged to discard all her necklaces and bangles, remove the beauty-spot from her brow, and wear a white sari. She becomes a pariah, who has no right to sit at the table with others or be present at family parties. Meeting her in the street is an unlucky sign, according to Hindu superstitions. The same custom, now seldom applied, requires a widow to shave her head.

Men in bright-coloured turbans step lightly into the arena near the lake. They sing a dance tune and beat out the rhythm with their hands on drums. The bells on the



women's feet beat out the rhythm of the dance too. Swaying now slowly, now at a quickened pace, the performers, by gestures and singing, convey the meaning of the dance. The dance, beautifully performed, tells the story of the brave deeds of the mythical hero Rama.

How lovingly the ancient traditions of folk art are cherished in India!

The visitors make for the "India Today" Pavilion. Khrushchov's sojourn in India has been scheduled for five days. He will probably stay for not more than half an hour in the "India Today" Pavilion. But that half hour will become an important part of the chronicle of his five-day visit.

Every picture and model at the "India Today" Pavilion conjures up a vision of vast spaces, the hot rolling fields of India, the land of 558,000 villages. Yes, 558,000 villages. Over 80 per cent of the population lives in the country, and almost half of the national income is the produce of agriculture.

The visitors inspect the pavilion. All the numerous exhibits, here, the figures, photographs, and pictures, contain, as it were, the fraction of a country's great heart, a country which, though bleeding from the wounds of colonialism, had not yielded, had refused to be just an appendage of the British "home country", a source of raw materials. The exhibits compel memories of the country's history and give a glimpse of its future.

For years crops were raised on the fields of India that were needed by the English, but not by the Indians. The colonial authorities were least concerned about providing India with food or supplying her industry with raw material. All branches of the country's economy fell into decay.

The impoverished soil and poor seeds affected the harvest yields of the staple crops such as rice, sugar-cane,

grain and legumes, which are still very low. Mr. Nehru once pointed out in Parliament that the yields of these crops were practically the lowest in the world. As a result, the Indian Government is obliged to import millions of tons of grain every year. In nine years ending 1959 the country imported grain to the value of Rs 10,000 million. This is one and a half times the amount of money spent on agricultural development throughout India's first five-year plan and is equal to the expenditure earmarked under the second five-year plan.

In the years following her achievement of independence India did a great deal towards combating such a calamity as mass famine. But the problem has not been solved yet completely. India has started to produce more rice—the staple food of the Indian—more grain and vegetables. But there is no end of work to be done to overcome the backward condition of India's agriculture, the age-old legacy of colonial rule.

During the days of colonial oppression relations between the various groups of proprietors, middlemen, tenants, and farm labourers in the countryside were such a tangle that the fate of the peasant largely depended on the arbitrary will of the stronger man. In one place these relations were determined by the maharaja—the prince, in another by a local official who had grown rich, in a third by the English themselves, in a fourth by a monastery, and so on. Every area had its own pattern of rural relationships. The colonialists were not interested in having laws passed which would restrict this arbitrary rule.

Landlordism continued to exist after the country had won its independence. True, the system of large-scale land-ownership has been officially liquidated, but the land was not confiscated from the landlords, it was redeemed. At the same time the landlords were allowed to keep large plots of land for so-called "personal" cultivation. This meant that the land was retained by the landlord for his own private needs. But this did not mean that he had to



till his own field; it sufficed for him to be non-absentee. The land that every member of a landlord's family was allowed to keep was very often an immense allotment of hundreds and even thousands of hectares. Only in Kashmir, where the agrarian reform was carried out under the conditions of a powerful upswing of the national-liberation struggle, did the population receive land from the landlords without compensation, and the big landed proprietors there were allowed to keep only limited plots.

At the same time millions of poor peasants and farm labourers in India have not received any land to this day.

Most of the holdings do not exceed two hectares per family. There are a great many landless peasants in the country. Nearly 30 per cent of the rural population, that is, tens of millions of people, are farm labourers. Half of these have no land at all, and the rest have such small plots that their owners are obliged to work for hire in order to make a living. Most of the agricultural workers do not have regular employment. Non-guaranteed pay by the day keeps this army under the constant threat of hunger and poverty. Usurer's capital still dominates the countryside. According to the information of the Reserve Bank of India, the usurers accounted for 75.7 per cent of all agricultural loans granted during 1951-1952. At present, according to various estimates, the peasants' indebtedness to the usurers amounts to Rs 11,800 million. Interest alone paid to the usurers amounts to as much as Rs 1,000 million a year. According to the data of the Agricultural Loans Committee, about 63 per cent of all peasant families are in debt.

The sponsors of the agrarian reforms promised to rid the countryside of the middlemen, the burden of whose activities is borne by the poor peasants. So far, however, all these reforms are in their initial stages, because reactionary interests are doing everything possible to sabotage them. This sabotage assumes various forms—from speeches

in Parliament and attempts to put through reactionary measures to glorifying the "romanticism" and "exotic glamour" of the old Indian village.

All this points to the acute state of social antagonisms in the Indian countryside.

The Indian peasant's land-hunger, his craving for an allotment, however small, had remained unappeased for centuries. It was with a demand for land that the disinherited of India rose to the struggle against the colonialists, the local princes and the landlords. The question of the land confronted independent India more sharply than ever. The light of freedom had illumined people's minds, the peasants believed in the possibility of achieving equality and a normal life, they were expecting land now, demanding it with still greater insistence.

A wave of peasant unrest mounted throughout the country. That was when the utopian idea of attaining universal prosperity—*sarvodaya*, obtained currency. *Sarvodaya*, according to its authors, presupposes the creation of a classless society founded on co-operation and mutual love and free from state power. The stages of this society were to be *bhudan*—a voluntary renunciation by proprietors of a part of their landed property, *gramdan*—land endowments by whole village communities to a special fund for allotment to the needy, and *sampattidan*—universal renunciation of wealth and property in favour of the community.

The initiator of this movement, Vinobha Bhave, walked from village to village and estate to estate, accompanied by a crowd of peasants, and tried to persuade the landlords to give up their "surplus" land. The land collection campaign was run on a wide scale, but the allotment fund is growing very slowly. The big proprietors give land reluctantly. Very often the land bestowed to the Bhave fund proves to be almost unfit for cultivation. Oddly enough, most of the donors are not big proprietors, but people without any land to spare. Often, in giving their land, they



naïvely hope to receive in future an equal share in the general reallocation. As a private owner, the peasant is an individualist. At the same time, though, the landless peasant does not by any means stand aloof from the collective body, and he is prepared to work in a co-operative association.

The *sarvodaya* movement failed appreciably to improve the position of the peasantry. What it did succeed in doing was to spread certain illusions in the minds of people about the landlords' land passing over to the peasants without a struggle.

But life is a ruthless teacher. Those who still believe in Bhave's utopian scheme will sooner or later realise their errors. The peasants' participation in the *sarvodaya* movement only goes to prove how great their urge is towards receiving land, how acute the land question that confronts the country.

Looking at the picture of a peasant, who is shown tilling the soil with a wooden plough, one of the journalists asks:

"Are there many of those antediluvian implements still being used on India's fields?"

"As recently as 1951 there were over 31,000,000 wooden ploughs and only 931,000 iron ones! The ratio is about the same today as well."

Indeed, on the small patches of land which the peasants rent from the owners there can be no question of using machines. Even for an iron plough the money is not easy to find.

In an article "What Is India", Robert P. Martin, an American journalist touring the country, writes with a sneer:

"The deeper you go into the countryside, the farther away the 20th century becomes.... But, in most of the country, the peasants still drink from and bathe in the village buffalo pond.... By 1966 it [the population] will have an estimated 480 million. Food production has been increasing at a steady rate, but not fast enough to meet this pop-

ulation growth. Every year India buys grain. But imports barely enable the people to stay one jump ahead of famine. And, at the current rate of population growth and food production, this country may be short 28 million tons of grain a year by 1965-66.

"India is trapped in a crazy-quilt pattern of religious restrictions, poverty and backwardness.... Millions of aged or useless cows, bands of wild monkeys, rats and other animals consume far more food than India imports each year. The cow is considered sacred; even the destruction of pests is against the Hindu code."

In ten years (ending 1959) India's national income, according to official reports, increased by 32 per cent, industrial output by 48 per cent, and agricultural produce by 25 per cent. This is good progress, of course. But the Indian countryside, impoverished by centuries of colonial oppression, is making only its first steps on the road towards a new pattern of life. On this road the Indian peasant not only has to overcome the burden of the past, but repel all attempts to encroach upon his future, resist the pressure of growing Indian capital.

The trouble is that in a country which has won political independence there are still many traces of colonialism, especially in the economic sphere. There are any amount of these "rootlets" in India's agriculture. The British monopolies have by no means surrendered their positions. They operate openly or under Indian signboards. Alongside them are American businessmen, successors of the British colonialists, who think nothing of taking an occasional kick at decrepit colonialism for the rather crude methods it used in the past, in the belief that there is greater loot to be had in more refined methods.

The visitors continue their inspection of the Exhibition. A picture shows a heap of coconuts under the green wings of a palm. Rice, coffee, tea, and jute articles are laid



out on the stands. We visualise a road running south into the hinterland. Plantations stretch away endlessly on both sides of the roadway. Black naked bodies, almost skeletons, of Indian peasants. Whose plantations are these? They are owned not only by the British now. American firms have a share in the business of the former colonialist masters.

American businessmen, who come to India in their thousands, poke about the country's roads, especially those of the south far removed from the capital. They bluffly slap the Indians on the back, and cheerfully produce seductive projects from expensive brief-cases promising prosperity even to a poor man. What are these projects?

Shortly before Khrushchov's arrival in India the American propaganda machine there went into action. Blatant advertisements boosting the "American way of life", the philosophy of personal gain, of getting rich at the expense of others, occupied the windows of the U.S. Information Service offices in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. The ballyhoo made the American propaganda bosses hoarse at press conferences.

After one of these numerous press conferences, Mr. John Clayton, the Press and Publicity Manager of U.S.I.S. in Madras, told one of us:

"What India wants is to have industry lugged into the peasant's field and under the roof of the palm-leaf shacks!"

What John Clayton meant, of course, was that American machines would be used on Indian soil and that India would become a market for them. But there was more to it than that. What this American had not said, we journalists had an opportunity of seeing for ourselves in the United States pavilion adjoining that of "India Today". This pavilion, with its numerous gilt cupolas, is a tawdry imitation of a large temple.

What is the United States displaying at the Exhibition? Among the exhibits there are many useful household goods, and interesting labour saving devices. Home comfort is

catered too widely. But are washing machines, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators a crying need for the present-day Indian peasant or worker? Owing to the painful legacy of colonialism, they are still land-starved, still living in shacks, as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago; millions of peasants till the soil with the wooden plough, harvest the crops by hand, and live in dire poverty. What the Indian peasant needs is land, a radical land reform, and not talk about "private enterprise". He needs a plough, not a refrigerator, a tractor, not a vacuum cleaner.

Together with vacuum cleaners the American propagandists are boosting their way of development for the countryside—the setting up of kulak farms. "The country will achieve prosperity not through co-operatives, not through the state sector, but through private enterprise," claims American propaganda.

United States economic missions have long been trying to prove that the American way is the best way for the Indian countryside. The farms set up with their aid have made individual peasants rich, it is true, but that way is only for the few. The country, the people as a whole get no benefit from it. Practice has shown convincingly that the "American way" demonstrated at the United States pavilion and experimented in the Indian countryside fails to solve India's problems.

India is seeking other ways to solve this acute and most vital problem.

The exhibits of the "India Today" Pavilion show hydro-development projects undertaken by the young republic. The problem of power and water is one of the most difficult in India. The electric power produced in the country was not even enough for town lighting. One of the republic's first steps was to build the Bhakra-Nangal hydro-project, which now gives water and power to a large area in the north. Khrushchov visited the construction site in



1955. It was then believed that the project would be completed in 1960, but so far it has not been fully realised. Dams and power stations are also being built in other districts, although the country, burdened as it is with many problems, is finding it difficult to develop construction on a large scale. But without hydro-developments industrial and agricultural progress in India is impossible.

What a source of joy and sorrow water is to the Indian! For three months running—from July to September—water spells calamity to the country. The monsoon cloud-bursts and tidal waves conspire together, as it were, to spill part of the ocean over the land. Simultaneously thawing snows rush their waters down into the valleys from the Himalayas. The rivers in spate flood extensive areas of land. Then the monsoons are over, and the sun quickly dries the inundated fields. Now there will be no rains for a long time. Drought sets in. And so from year to year—drought follows the flood, and after the drought comes the flood again. India is badly in need of effective means to protect her fields against these two calamities.

At a meeting of the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh, the biggest state in India's main agricultural district—the valley of the Ganges—Ram Murti, the Minister of Irrigation, said that during the last fifteen years the state had built more irrigation canals than during the last hundred years. What do these figures prove? First of all, that the colonialists plundered the country without thinking that there would come a time when the old canals would fall into decay and there would be no new ones, when the exhausted soil would be wholly at the mercy of Nature's whims. That time had come, and the country had to exert tremendous efforts to ward off new calamities. The figures truly sound appalling: the irrigated area today is less than 18 per cent of all India's arable lands. And that in a country where the drought sometimes lasts as long as eight months!

What should be done to put a speedy end to the neglect-

ed state of the economy caused by predatory colonialism, to bridge the gap between the wooden plough and India's first atomic reactor, a model of which is displayed in the "India Today" Pavilion?

Khrushchov's attention is drawn to the figures showing the progress made by India's first rural co-operatives.

As far back as 1953 the Indian Government had endorsed a programme of communal developments in the countryside. The object was to set up a form of co-operative societies, which, with definite financial and technical aid from the state, were to make for a revival of backward peasant farming.

The government framed what it called "community development projects" of the countryside. Every such "project" is divided into "blocks" of about 100 villages each. Each "block" has its "centre" which organises propaganda of agricultural science, methods, hygiene and sanitation, etc. It also has workshops in which peasants in their spare time are taught various trades.

In January 1959 the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress adopted a decision on the question of co-operation, which was supported by patriotic organisations, including the Communist Party of India. According to this decision four types of co-operative societies were to be introduced: a society for joint tilling of the land, a society for collective farming, a society for improved methods of cultivation, and a society for tilling the land on a leasehold basis. The setting up of one or another kind of society depends on local conditions and the economic features of the area. Hundreds of thousands of Indian peasants are already organised in various co-operative associations.

However, many key problems affecting the Indian countryside are still awaiting their solution.

"The weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest." The facts go to prove that this precept of Gandhi, inscribed over the entrance to the pavilion, is, unfortunately, far from having been fulfilled. Although co-



operation has made a start, the salient feature characterising the trend of development in the Indian countryside at present is the preservation of private ownership of the land with a preponderance of small, inefficient farms. Naturally, no radical solution of the complex problems of agriculture in India is possible under these circumstances.

Khrushchov stops before some models of metallurgical plants. He is interested in everything that has a bearing on the industrialisation as well as agricultural developments in India. Listening to him, the Indians are surprised at his extensive knowledge of things. Here is an example. Pointing to a panel picturing a plant, Khrushchov said:

"I can tell by the smoke that the fuel is not burning properly."

And, amid the hearty laughter of those around him, he adds:

"Probably it's the artist's fault. He had no clear idea of the technological process."

Khrushchov stops before a stand showing tracklaying. The work is done by hand. Asked by an Indian what method of tracklaying was used in the Soviet Union, Khrushchov says:

"We're building railways differently now. There are hardly any workers on the site. The track—rails and ties—is pre-assembled, and then a tracklaying machine puts them in place in front of it. That's why railways are being built swiftly.... We have now stopped making steam locomotives altogether, and are manufacturing only electric and diesel locomotives."

Khrushchov, Nehru and the people accompanying them make for the pavilion over which the flags of the Soviet Union, its Union republics and India flutter in the soft February breeze.

Host and guest have now exchanged roles. Khrushchov shows Nehru the achievements of the socialist state.

Nehru's attention is attracted by the models of the Soviet sputniks, spaceship, and the atomic-driven ice-breaker *Lenin*. An Exhibition employee, an Indian by the name of Desai, says:

"The Soviet people are getting big harvests from land on which nothing used to grow. . . . People like these could probably grow coconut palms on the moon as well."

Khrushchov meets a group of Heroes of Socialist Labour—collective-farm managers from the Soviet Central Asian republics. They have come here to give their Indian colleagues the benefit of their experience. Khrushchov recognises his country's celebrities, whom he greets warmly and introduces to Prime Minister Nehru.

In the hall where the visitors are told about Soviet culture, they are shown books by Indian authors published in the languages of the Soviet Union.

The visitors come out on to an open space outside the pavilion where they inspect the latest Soviet machines, which have ousted manual labour in a variety of farming jobs.

"How do you do, Nikita Sergeyevich!" Soviet collective farmers, tractor drivers, combine operators and cattle-breeders, who have become Exhibition guides for a time, greet their head of Government.

Pedigree cattle and poultry are on view under a half-shed. A dairymaid offers milk fresh from a Kostroma cow to the visitors. They are shown racing horses bred in the Soviet Union. Mr. Nehru, who is a lover of horseflesh, examines the horses appreciatively.

Khrushchov and Nehru get into an open car, and drive off, followed by an enthusiastic crowd of visitors.

The World Fair in Delhi draws capacity crowds. This particularly applies to the Soviet pavilion. The Indians show a keen interest in the achievements of a great friendly people. We thumb through the Visitors' Book containing entries by people who had visited the Soviet pavilion.



"It is fascinating," runs one of the entries. "The great pavilion of a great power," states another laconic entry.

Others are more lengthy. "Your achievements in the sphere of agriculture have impressed me greatly," writes Marinda, an Indian. "You Russians deserve the highest praise. May friendship between the U.S.S.R. and India strengthen." "The Soviet pavilion testifies to the progress of co-operative farming in the U.S.S.R., which is a great example for India," says Jagu Singh, a peasant from Rajasthan. "We, a group of peasants from Bihar,\* came to Delhi to see your pavilion. We were most impressed by your machines and the successes of your co-operatives."

The writers are different people, but all of them note the splendid achievements of the Soviet Union, all of them want India to become as developed a country and her people to have as wide opportunities for progress.

The Soviet Union's pavilion demonstrates the results of the peasants' collective labour, the successes achieved by large-scale mechanised farms and planned economy. These successes represent moral support for the co-operative development of the Indian countryside, which, though still in the stage of half-measures and experiments, is already proving its utility.

This was brought home again to us in the village of Suratgarh, which Khrushchov visited the next day.

### **"THE FIRST SWALLOW"**

There are many wonders—cave temples, palaces and tombs—to be met with all over India. They represent the nation's precious cultural heritage, living landmarks of the country's history. Today, in the desert of Rajasthan, India's toilers, with the aid of the Soviet Union, have worked another wonder in the shape of an agricultural farm. Created on what was once dead soil, the Suratgarh Farm

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\* The state of Bihar is situated in the valley of the Ganges. Its population suffers annually from floods and droughts.—Authors.

is indeed a miracle. Mr. Nehru, who visited Suratgarh, called the farm "a new temple", which should be bowed to in worship.

Our plane flies over a patchwork of peasants' fields. Some of the patches are green with fresh shoots, some gleam with the gold of ripening crops, others show the yellow of fresh tillages. But what is this? The farther out we get from Delhi the more bleak the scene. The fields become scarce, the shoots more meagre. And then the fields disappear altogether. No villages can be seen. Sands. Hills with starveling prickly shrubs scattered over them. A barren plain, seemingly without end.

The Thar Desert is a blank space on the map of South-East Asia. A bleak lifeless country. The greater part of Rajasthan is desert or semi-desert, arid barren lands.

In the sultry months of April, May and June, when the heat is scorching, clouds of burning hot sand rise from this desert to swoop down upon the fields, villages and towns of India. The deadly breath of the desert penetrates deeper and deeper into the country. Man finds it harder and harder to check this advance upon the land, especially with the means at his disposal here—the wooden plough and the spade. All on his own, by dint of tremendous effort, the Indian has been trying to keep life going on his small patch of land.

The Rajputs, the inhabitants of this state, have always had to work hard to win their crust of bread and every single drop of water for drinking and watering their fields. For centuries they have been doomed to grapple with the cruel elements, with privations and meagre food their only reward.

Rajasthan was a gateway for the conquering hordes who poured into the country without having to cross the Himalayas. The Rajputs were always the sentinels of India; they were the first to breast the attacks of the invading foes.



The Rajputs are brave warriors. No wonder they bear the title of "singh", which stands for "lion".

It was here in the 16th century that the women of Chittorgarh, when their men had died defending the fort, walked into the pyres so as not to fall into the enemy's hands and as an expression of their faithfulness to their husbands in accordance with the custom. Since then the motto of the Rajputs was the liberation of Chittorgarh. They gave a vow never, until the fort was liberated, to live in houses, to sleep on beds, and to eat from metallic utensils.

Time destroyed the walls of Chittorgarh, and the ages rolled on, but the Rajputs remained true to their vow. To release the people from this vow, the Prime Minister of liberated India, Mr. Nehru, led the Rajputs in the "assault" of the ancient fortress. The Rajputs went to this "assault" with joy and enthusiasm, with cries of "To Chittor!" "Deliverance has come!" "Give us land and homes!"

The land, of which the Indian peasants had been dreaming for centuries, was there, but it was not theirs—it belonged to the landlords, to the colonialists, to the cruel elements. It was from this struggle with the elements that there were born not only the austere customs of the people but their passionate love of their native land. Looking down from the plane, one wonders how anybody could grow anything on this arid land.

Then suddenly, beneath the wing of the plane, large squares of fields surrounded by sands come into view. Lush green shoots, young trees along the roadsides, canals with water have come to take the place of the dead desert. At first it seems a mirage. But it is no mirage. It is the Surratgarh Mechanised Farm.

The plane lands on a natural airfield—a patch of open ground. When the dust raised by the plane settles, we see Rajputs gaily dressed in white garments and orange-coloured or white turbans, holding garlands and bouquets of saffron, a favourite flower of the Hindus.

Khrushchov is given a hearty welcome both as the leader of a friendly power and a man to whom the farm is indebted for its birth. When Khrushchov first visited India in 1955 he proposed setting up a model farm with the help of the Soviet Union. No one believed at the time that this idea would be put into effect so quickly, and in such a godforsaken place at that.

Hands that have learned to take from Nature her grudging gifts are now stretched out towards Khrushchov with garlands of flowers as he passes by. The hands of Suratgarh's peasants lovingly adorn the honoured guest with flowers which they had grown with such difficulty. Genuine joy shines in the eyes of these people as they greet the head of the Soviet Government. There is a heartfelt note in the voices that rhythmically chant the familiar words: "*Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!*" People who have learned from experience the value of the Soviet people's fraternal friendship express their affection for that people's ambassador with special warmth and sincerity.

Signs of the new life are everywhere in evidence at Suratgarh. The arch spanning the road is entwined with the green leaves of the mustard plant and ears of wheat. Words of welcome in Hindi are inscribed on a red streamer with letters of cotton grown on the plantations of Suratgarh.

Khrushchov makes a round of the farm, whose fields spread for dozens of miles, in an open car. Behind, raising a curtain of dust, follows a motorcade of thirty more cars containing Soviet, Indian, West-European, Asian and American journalists.

Even after seeing the farm it is hard to believe that people have succeeded in wresting this land from the grip of the desert. How did they do it?

In the days of yore, about four thousand years ago, the legend runs, a fertile valley lay in the vicinity of Suratgarh. The small village of Rang Mah near the farm stands on what was the site of a now vanished city. Two brim-



ming rivers irrigated the region's lands. Ships rode upon them carrying food and the wares of the local craftsmen to other regions and bringing back goods from other places. The towns and villages were famed for their wealth and prosperity. But one day a terrible calamity smote the region, one of those calamities which occur in our day. The summer monsoons brought heavy tropical rains with them. The rivers became swollen, burst their banks and destroyed everything around. People perished or ran away in terror to other places. After the flood came the drought.

Man failed to hold his own in the struggle with the elements. The desert kept advancing, burying the fertile lands beneath dead sand. The rivers dried up. The subsoil waters went deep underground.

The small railway station of Suratgarh barely managed to drag out a hard poor life. The water from its one and only well was not enough to go round. Water had to be brought up daily in railway tank-cars.

That was the kind of country it was. But people decided to launch an offensive against the desert.

Work was started on Khrushchov's proposal made in 1955. Two months after he left India Soviet machines and equipment began to arrive in Suratgarh. Dozens of bulldozers, ditchers, tractors, combines, cultivators, automobiles, and other machines were sent as a gift from the Soviet Union.

Soviet specialists came to teach the farm workers how to handle the machines and raise bumper crops. The Soviet specialist A. V. Selivanov spent a long time in India. The Indians who worked with him entertain a profound respect for their Soviet friend, who treated them like a brother and gave them generous help.

Under the guidance of Soviet specialists the Indian peasants fought a hard battle with the elements. Bulldozers ripped the shroud of sand from the earth and steadily drove the desert back. The trench excavators, each of which did the work of 2,400 men, laid a path for the water,

which came down from the old Rajasthan canal. With the completion of the Bhakra-Nangal hydro-project water will come from there as well. The reclaimed land was immediately sown to wheat, mustard, taramira—a local drought-resistant oil-bearing plant—barley, and gram—a cereal widely used in food by the Indians.

In a year the farm started yielding results. During the winter harvest of 1956-1957—the Indians call it rabi—the farm cropped over 300 tons of grain and legumes (wheat, gram and barley) and about 400 tons of oil-bearing crops (mustard and taramira).

The first summer harvest, called the harif, was raised under extremely adverse conditions—there was hardly any rain. The wells ran dry. There was very little water in the main canals. The Government of Rajasthan proclaimed a critical situation in the summer of 1957 owing to the shortage of water and food. But Suratgarh escaped the fate of the other districts of Rajasthan. Many peasants in the state were compelled to quit their villages and go away in search of water and food, whereas the Suratgarh farm cropped a rich harvest of grain and fodder for the animals. What a help these products of Suratgarh were to the stricken areas! From the first year of its existence the farm stood firmly upon its feet and began to pay its way.

The fleet of cars halts by a field of mustard. The pressmen, Soviet and foreign, thickly covered with a layer of reddish dust, jump out into the roadway and run towards the spot where Khrushchov's car has stopped, some holding the cameras dangling at their sides, some opening their notebooks as they run, while others contrive to do both at the same time.

Surrounded by a crowd of correspondents and members of his travelling party, Khrushchov stands watching the threshing of the mustard seeds. S. K. Patil, Minister of the Indian Government, and Mahadeo Singh, General Manager



of the farm, tell him about the farm's work. Khrushchov carefully examines the mustard stalks.

"Yes, they're spilling," says Mahadeo Singh, reading Khrushchov's thoughts.

"I think you ought to start cutting a bit earlier, when the mustard isn't quite ripe," says Khrushchov. "Let it lie for about five days, then the grain won't spill."

Khrushchov points to the combine that is threshing the mustard, and observes to the director in a friendly manner:

"It isn't right to keep the combine standing still."

"We tried to do the threshing on the move, but it doesn't work."

Khrushchov goes deep into all the details of the farm's work and gives the Suratgarhians useful advice. He tells them about the experience of the Soviet crop engineers. One of the farm's leading workers pointed out that specialists did not advise changing the combine's operating conditions, to which Khrushchov remarks:

"It happens that specialists do not see the right solution. Sometimes a specialist gets used to what his professor had taught him, but life goes forward. So you must seek your own solution. It all depends on your own people."

And amid appreciative laughter, he adds:

"When practice will have discovered the right way, the scientists will come along, write a thesis and take a scientific degree."

Summing up his observations, Khrushchov advised the Suratgarhians to practise selective cropping.

"We have a hot sun here," the Indians said.

"The sun's the same everywhere, in India and in the Soviet Union," said Khrushchov. "Nature's laws are the same everywhere. The thing is to make the right use of them. Obviously, it's a matter of how long you dry the mustard. You can find that out by practical means."

By advice, a joke, and a remark, Khrushchov prods people to seek new ways of raising the harvest yield and im-

proving methods of work. Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, the farm's managers, and the press correspondents are amazed at Khrushchov's remarkable flair for putting his finger on the right spot. They are delighted at his sincere desire to help people overcome their difficulties.

Khrushchov has a kind word and useful advice for everybody. Nor are the journalists jostling around him left out of it. Out there by the mustard field he says to them:

"Very good mustard this! You journalists might do worse than add some of it to your reports."

Back into the cars, and off again down the dusty roads of Suratgarh. The February sun is lukewarm. It is a mild Indian winter, with the mercury standing at 20 degrees. But this kind of weather does not last long in these parts. Soon the heat will rise sharply. The temperature will be 50 degrees in the shade with practically no drop during the night. Work in the fields will then become a gruelling task. The machines will be scorching to the touch. Only the industrious Rajput, inured to the heat and hard living, is able to work in the field in summer as well as in winter. The sight of him commands respect and admiration. Not only does he have to "touch" the machine but he has to drive it all day long in the blazing heat. Soviet people, too, have learned to work under the hot Indian sun at Suratgarh, at the building site of the Bhilai Steel Works and other construction projects.

A cotton plantation. Once, before the coming of the colonialists, the Indian land was famous for its cotton, and India famous for her beautiful cotton prints. This fame was world-wide. Indian cotton goods were popular even in far-away Russia. In fact, the Russian Government in 1665 instructed the merchant Shcherbak, who was going to India, to invite "Indian craftsmen over to Moscow who were skilled in making and dying cotton stuffs".

Indian cotton goods found their way into the European market, and became a menace to England's textile indus-



try. The colonialists did everything they could to reduce the area under cotton in India. Now the country has started cotton manufacturing again on a wide scale, since the textile industry has been revived and has resumed its place as one of the leading industries. Indian cotton, however, has a short staple, and the country is obliged to import long-stapled cotton from the United Arab Republic, the Sudan and other countries.

Profoundly understanding the needs and interests of India, Khrushchov suggests cultivating long-stapled cotton, which the country needs most of all, on the fertile soil of Suratgarh, where there is plenty of sunshine. The Indians accompanying him over the farm complain that cotton cultivation is a very laborious process, and that so far the Soviet machines on the farm had not been mastered. Khrushchov remarks that manual labour in cotton cultivation is gradually disappearing in the Soviet Union.

"I would advise you to send a few people to Tajikistan or Uzbekistan to work for a season in their cotton fields. Then machines would not be standing idle here. Machines without the people to work them are dead things. You must learn. Our cotton-growers could, on their part, come and work here for a while. That would be a good exchange of experience."

When the farm's General Manager, retired Indian Army General Mahadeo Singh, remarks that Khrushchov has an excellent knowledge of farming and makes many useful suggestions, the latter says to him:

"Come and take some lessons from us. You must be able to teach your workers, and not only take lessons from them."

Mahadeo Singh gratefully accepts the invitation. (He visited Moscow at the end of April 1960 to study Soviet agriculture.)

The invitation to the Suratgarhians to come and study in the Soviet Union is further proof of Khrushchov's concern for the development of India's economy and the more

efficient utilisation of machines and the potentialities of the soil. Indeed, Soviet cotton-growers have something to teach them. Before the October Revolution the peoples of Central Asia lived in conditions that differed slightly, if at all, from those of the Indians under colonial rule. The Soviet power smashed the chains of national and social oppression for all time, and gave a new happier life to the peoples of Central Asia. It enabled them in a brief space to achieve unprecedented heights in the development of science and culture, in the creation of an advanced industry and a highly productive agriculture. The Indians who visit the Soviet Union are literally staggered by these successes.

Khrushchov is shown potato, jowar,\* and wheat crops. He watches the Soviet sprinkling machines at work in the wheat field. Even the air there is cleaner and fresher, saturated with a fine spray.

A wall of wheat, thick, dark-green in some places, undersized, puny and pale in others. Obviously, there is not enough water to go round. The Bhakra-Nangal hydro-project is not completed yet, and the farm's water supply is not regular.

The farm is still in its growing stage. Its total area will cover over 12,000 hectares, but so far a little over half of this has been brought into cultivation. Even so, Suratgarh today is the biggest farm not only in India but throughout South-East Asia. The farm produces graded seeds of wheat, mustard, cotton, gram, barley, sugar-cane, taramira, and bajra.\*\* These seeds are sent out all over the country.

Suratgarh will soon be going in for diversified farming, which will include stock-breeding and poultry farming.

The cars stop at a large patch of land, which is still empty. Khrushchov is asked to "lay the foundation" of an

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\* Indian millet.

\*\* Pearl millet.



orchard here. A marble board mounted in the gate of the orchard has the following inscription carved on it in Hindi and Russian: "Suratgarh Central Mechanised Farm. This year the first tree was planted by His Excellency Mr. N. S. Khrushchov, February 13, 1960, when he visited this farm."

Khrushchov takes a little silver spade, engraved by Rajasthan craftsmen, which is presented to the distinguished visitor for the ceremony, and plants a citrus sapling in the ground.

"I wish you success in creating orchards," says Khrushchov after he has planted the tree. "Grow orchards. We shall give you wheat, and you will give us fruit in exchange."

The Indians, of course, need fruit themselves. Many people think of India as a land where fruit trees grow at every step. This is far from the truth. Most of the cultivated land here is sown to cereals, chiefly rice, and only on the field bounds can one see everywhere fruit trees—mostly mangoes. More rarely one meets banana plantations.

Apples, citrus fruits, and grapes are grown for marketing only in the mountain districts. These fruits are luxuries to the ordinary Indian. That is why the laying of an orchard in the desert of Suratgarh is a particularly joyous event.

Before leaving Suratgarh, Khrushchov, at the request of the newspapermen, makes a brief statement.

"Just now I cannot pass any opinion about the farm," he says. "After what I have seen of the machines here, it would be presumptuous to give an appraisal, or draw any general conclusions. Judging by the ploughing I have seen, the tractor drivers could be said to have learned how to handle their machines efficiently. In mustard harvesting you will have to make a few changes. Obviously, you will have to change over to selective cropping instead of harvesting the whole field. Cotton cultivation, as our own experience shows, is better done by check-row pocket

planting. This will enable you to make more extensive use of machines and reduce the amount of work done by hand. And that is especially important in a hot climate. We are prepared to share our experience if it will be of any use to our Indian friends. But only if they wish it and need it. On the whole, I don't think it is advisable for one country to mechanically adopt the system of another. I want to thank the Director of this farm, Mr. Mahadeo Singh, and all the staff, who have given us such a friendly reception and to wish this farm success."

Indians are already reaping the benefits of the Suratgarh Mechanised Farm. The Soviet machines have earned a good name for themselves. India's folk singers have composed songs about these machines and about Soviet aid to India. The farm workers sang them to Khrushchov. One of them runs like this:

*Friends, the Soviet combine is a wonderful  
machine.*

*In one day it harvests a big crop.  
Red-coloured it came to us  
And settled in Suratgarh.  
It transforms deserts into orchards.*

"Deserts into orchards"—that is actually what is taking place amid the sands of Suratgarh. When proposing to set up a farm here, Khrushchov called it the "first swallow", having in mind that it would be followed by other mechanised farms in increasing numbers. Suratgarh provides convincing proof that this path of development for India's agriculture is the most effective one.

"It is quite correct that the establishment of this type of big farms will considerably increase food production, and we have already gone into that matter," said S. K. Patil, minister of the Indian Government. "My Ministry has set up a special committee which is studying the possibility of creating such farms. Many governments of the



states have already offered their lands to be used for this purpose."

Speaking in Parliament in April 1960, M. V. Krishnappa, Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture, stated that the Indian Government intended to set up another ten mechanised farms like the one at Suratgarh in different districts of the country.

The Suratgarh farm is thriving, bringing life to the desert, and enriching the country with its experience, its produce, and the force of its example. The seeds of Suratgarh, sown in Indian soil, should yield a rich harvest.

Khrushchov's visit to the farm and his remarks and advice made headline news in the Indian press.

The Bangalore newspaper *Deccan Herald*, wrote in an article dealing with this visit: "The Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Khrushchov, on Saturday spent three hours at the state-owned mechanised farm at Suratgarh, where arid lands have been converted into blooming fields through Indo-Soviet collaboration."

Suratgarh is not just a field of battle, it is something more, wrote the correspondent of the *Indian Express*. It is a great symbol of Indian-Soviet co-operation and a turning point in the mechanisation of agriculture. Soviet tractors, combines and bulldozers have transformed the barren desert into a flowering oasis. The migratory birds from Siberia who come here for the winter do not recognise the old places, but they see the steel machines made in their country performing the useful job of strengthening co-operation between India and the U.S.S.R.

The same thought was echoed by most of the newspapers which reported Khrushchov's visit to the farm. It is precisely Indo-Soviet collaboration, for which the head of the Soviet Government had done so much, that has yielded such rich fruit.

Indo-Soviet collaboration is being extended. Another of its results is to be seen in the Bhilai Works, which Khrushchov visited the next day.

# THE SPIRIT OF BHILAI

## A POEM OF METAL

There is an old folk song that they sing after nightfall on the mountains and in the river valleys, on the fields, and in the streets of Indian villages. It is the mother's song of her new-born son. What lies in store for him? Will he have rice in plenty? Will he break the overseer's whip? Will he knock the rifle out of the oppressor's hand?

He will live, the Indian mother sings, to the joy of his homeland and his people.

The new Indian songs say a great son has been born recently to the country. His name is Bhilai, and his birthday is February 4, 1959.

The times and the people's spirit set the pace for him. It took a big portion of the Mogul Emperor Shahjahan's life to build the white marble mausoleum of Taj Mahal. Several hundreds of years millions of hands carved the cave temples and sculptures of Ajanta-Elura with primitive instruments in the rocky cliffs.

The modern industrial enterprises in Chittaranjan, Madras, Calcutta, Bangalore and Bombay were built in five years. The first section of the giant Bhilai Steel Works was built in three.

The place where Bhilai stands today was only recently



a sun-scorched semi-desert fringed by impassable jungle, the home of tigers. Hunters from distant lands, seekers of excitement though they were, rarely came so far.

Today an industrial town of New India—straight streets, cinemas, shops, clubs, schools and hotels—has risen beside the industrial giant. Taj Mahal is described as a poem of marble, and Indian literature today calls Bhilai a poem of metal.

It is a poem composed by the workers of Nagpur and Zaporozhye, Raipur and Zhdanov, Calcutta and Magnitogorsk, Bombay and Moscow, Trivandrum and Leningrad—a poem of the fraternity of two nations.

You are struck, when you see the new town, by the way the cultures and customs of the Indian and Soviet peoples mingle intimately. At Bhilai you see the latest Indian films and the Soviet picture, *The Fate of a Man*, in the cinemas, and hear songs of the Indian popular hero, Prithvi Raj, and of Yermak, the Russian Cossack. On the sportsfields you see hockey and the Russian national game of gorodki. On the flowerbeds outside the attractive cottages grow rhododendrons and mangoes alongside the golden sunflower brought there from the Ukraine.

Some four years ago two of the authors of this book flew from Calcutta to Bombay. A bulletin was circulated among the passengers. It indicated the altitude and the speed of the airliner, and announced the hour of arrival in Bombay as 2.30 p.m. Then it said we were flying over Bhilai, the site of the iron-and-steel project. There were a few Americans in the seats in front. As they passed on the bulletin, one of them murmured:

“Bhilai? What’s that?”

We pressed against the window. There was red-scorched earth beneath, with winding country roads and shabby little villages amidst patches of jungle. The great battle for Indian steel had begun somewhere down below. Settled in the desert, Soviet specialists and Indians had started in on their job. Western propaganda tried to sow mistrust

of the Soviet Union's capacity to build a modern steel works. Chester Bowles, former U.S. Ambassador to India, said the Soviet proposal to build the plant went far beyond Russia's economic possibilities.

The facts have often in the past squashed Western doubts about Soviet economic possibilities. Now history has repeated itself.

There is no need any longer to point out the whereabouts of Bhilai in the bulletin. A giant beacon, its lights show the way to aircraft at night. They blot out the luminescent stars in India's tropical sky. And in the daytime the works, that powerful unit of India's national industry, is visible from the air dozens of miles away.

All India can see Bhilai.

All Asia can see Bhilai, because it is symbolic of the peoples' great dream of independence and progress, friendship and equality.

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Four years ago powerful bulldozers turned up the Bhilai earth. The site for the future works had been carefully chosen. In Rajara, near Bhilai, there are rich deposits of high-quality iron ore; in Jharia and Bokari there is plenty of coal, and there is limestone in Nandini. In the vicinity of Biraspur there are reserves of dolomite and there is manganese ore near Nagpur. There are two large water reservoirs in the proximity of the plant, and a big power station some 250 kilometres away in Korba.

Construction went ahead rapidly. During his visit to Bhilai in December 1957, Prime Minister Nehru wrote in the visitors' book: "What was once a dream begins to take shape and come true." Bhilai is "a symbol and a portent of the India of the future".

In reading this inscription, one of us, who had had the privilege of accompanying the Prime Minister of India during his tour of the Soviet Union, recalled the following episode. It had occurred in Magnitogorsk. Nehru was invited



to ascend the Ai-Darly Mountain, which offers a breathtaking view of industrial Magnitogorsk, the fine project of the early Soviet five-year plans which elevated once backward Russia to the pinnacle of industrialisation and progress. Delighted by the view, Nehru asked the cinema operator to film it.

"The Indian cinema-goer," he said, "will now see the true Russia."

And perhaps on the day three years ago when Jawaharlal Nehru made the first inscription in the visitors' book of the Bhilai project, reflecting on the future of India, he too recalled the view of Magnitogorsk from the top of the Ai-Darly.

Pages of the calendar fluttered by in rapid succession. A year passed. The Bhilai site was still a field of battle against the desert. Sceptics shook their heads. They thought work was moving ahead too slowly. But they did not see the most important thing. While earth-digging machinery worked away in Bhilai, Soviet factories were busy filling urgent orders for India. Many thousands of workers had their hands full.

Many Soviet men and women can proudly say today that they had done their bit for Bhilai. Those are people of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Gorky, Lvov, Kharkov, Kherson and other big and small Soviet towns. More than 400 Soviet enterprises manufactured metal constructions, technological and electrical equipment, pipes, fire-bricks and other supplies for Bhilai. Designers made a big contribution, too, adding up to more than 150,000 drafts and drawings of Bhilai.

An unceasing stream of freight with Soviet trademarks sailed over the ocean from the Black Sea port of Odessa to Bombay, Calcutta and Vishakhapatnam.

Great is the might of the Soviet Union! While fulfilling and overfulfilling its Seven-Year Plan, while advancing technology, while scaling unheard-of heights in science, which furthered the conquest of outer space, the Soviet

Union was able to render effective assistance to its friends. Bhilai is one of the tokens of that assistance.

Came the decisive 1959.

On the night of February 3 the first Bhilai blast furnace was started up. The assemblymen headed by the famed Dnieprodzerzhinsk builder, Ivan Fadeyev, turned the furnace over to the steelworkers. The crew of steelworkers was headed by Ivan Sagaidak, the distinguished Magnitogorsk foreman. He made a final check, then ordered: "Air!"

Flames burst out of the tapping hole. The blast furnace began uninterrupted operation for many, many years. Twenty-four hours later it yielded its first pig-iron.

"Zinda bâd!"

"Hurrah!"

"Long live Bhilai!"

"Long live Soviet-Indian friendship!"

The Soviet and Indian builders of Bhilai were jubilant when the heart of the steel works began to beat. The first Bhilai blast furnace was put into operation 18 months after construction began. India, and not India alone, has never seen such rates of construction.

We returned on foot that February night from the plant to the workers' estate. It was a long walk. Indian, Russian and Ukrainian songs resounded in the warm crystal-clear air of the Bhilai winter.

Mr. Shrivastava, the General Manager of the Bhilai Works, Senior Engineer V. Dymshits and his deputy, N. Goldin, walked arm in arm. The glow of smelted ore illuminated the sky behind them. Before them were the bright lights of the new town of Bhilainagar.

Shrivastava, Dymshits and Goldin conversed excitedly. Shrivastava, a soft-featured man of medium height, invariably calm, gave vent this time to his Indian temperament. He gesticulated. He spoke loudly and heatedly.

"Believe me," he exclaimed, "today's pig-iron does you credit. Now we have a real idea of the Soviet Union's pos-



sibilities. When I first saw your Seven-Year Plan it took my breath away. But deep down inside me there was a trace of doubt. It was the glow of the Bhilai furnace that lit up your seven-year targets for me. I realised that if you make the mark it can only be a joy to us Indians. India would not have had Bhilai without Soviet assistance."

"No question about it," Goldin observed modestly, "your people and ours have worked well."

"It's a pity," he added with a twinkle in his eye, "that liqueur is outlawed in your state of Madhya Pradesh. We always wash down the first iron we make. I'll admit, our wives are in favour of prohibition. They say that when they go back home, they'll try to keep the Indian law in their homes. Our people understand and respect your laws."

From afar came the tune of *Evenings Near Moscow*. It was not the Soviet builders alone who sang it. Indians who had come back from the Soviet Union after industrial training and practice joined them.

"I just remembered the war," Dymshits said. "Our country lay in ruins. The fascists had come to the gates of Stalingrad (now Volgograd). At that time we were building new blast furnaces in Magnitogorsk—and new open-hearth furnaces too. The Americans wouldn't believe us. They said we were telling tales, making Bolshevik propaganda. But when Nelson, the U.S. industrialist, visited Magnitogorsk, he exclaimed: 'I can't understand it! It's a miracle!' To this day some people in the United States cannot appreciate the vital force that does wonders in the Soviet Union."

The time when the first Bhilai furnace was started up coincided with the Twenty-First Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Addressing the Congress, Khrushchov was stormily applauded when he announced that the first Bhilai iron had been smelted, describing it as an eminent victory of the Soviet and Indian peoples.

Khrushchov said:

"May the first pig-iron from this works be a symbol of strengthening friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and India.

"May the intrigues of the imperialists, who are seeking to hinder the further development of Soviet-Indian friendship, our joint struggle for peace, for the triumph of the principles of peaceful coexistence, burn in the fire of that blast furnace.

"May the heat from this blast furnace warm the friendship of our two great peoples.

"May our friendship be as strong as the metal smelted at that works, which was built by the joint efforts of the governments and peoples of the Soviet Union and India."

Khrushchov's words were thunderously applauded.

More than fifty Indian and foreign correspondents came to Bhilai at the time to see the furnace started up. The big ladles with the "Uralmashzavod-U.S.S.R." trade mark were prime points of attraction for the photographers. The Indian newspapermen congratulated the Soviet engineers heartily. One of them, S. Swaminathan of the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay, said:

"What we saw in Bhilai and what we learned from Premier Khrushchov's report to the Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U. convinced us that the Soviet Union would always, in increasing measure, assist the countries of Asia and Africa."

No more than eight months passed after the day when the first jet of Bhilai iron cast its glow upon the industrial scene. Yet the appearance of the works changed beyond recognition. The second blast furnace and the blooming mill were assembled by then, and the second coke battery was being heated up. The power station was completed, and so were the forge and press shop, and the electric furnaces for steel and ferrous metals.

Came the day when the open-hearth shop was to be



started up. The Bhilai Works looked festively solemn that morning of October 12, 1959. The men wore their holiday clothes. Agarwal, an Indian worker trained in Zaporozhye, tapped the furnace. The first tons of Bhilai steel poured hissing into the ladle.

"That minute," General Manager Shrivastava said with emotion, "I thought involuntarily of the Soviet rockets and sputniks. Just as they opened a new era of interplanetary travel, so does the open furnace of Bhilai open new horizons for the development of Indian metallurgy."

The achievements in Bhilai inspired the Indian people. The word Bhilai appeared more and more often in the newspaper columns. Indian news-reels told viewers about the new works. In Bhilai, meanwhile, we heard the ancient legend which explained the traditional Indian greeting of *namaste*.

"Once upon a time," an Indian engineer told us, "people decided to build a mountain of stone so high that the next day would be visible from it. The people began building the mountain, but nothing came of it. The earthen foundation sagged under the weight of the rocks. They built a granite foundation. It sagged as well. They built a marble foundation, and it, too, failed to bear the burden. The same happened with a silver and a golden foundation. A sage came and told the people what to do. He ordered them to stand closely together and raise the mountain on their shoulders. That was how the Himalayas came into being."

"This is why," the Indian continued, "we put our palms together in greeting, to remind each other of that legendary mountain. The sign is known as *namaste*. But in our age friendship erects open-hearth and blast furnaces, rather than mountains, and from the height of those furnaces the future is seen better than from a peak."

One of the authors of this book then read our Indian friend some verse written when the first Bhilai steel was smelted.

*India, kingdom of jungle and mountain,  
 Long had you thirsted for steel!  
 Mighty Bhilai, with furnace and foundry,  
 Heralds a dream coming real.  
 Gently I take it—a child from a cradle—  
 This tiny newly borne plaque —  
 A child of Bhilai, called forth to existence  
 By Soviet workers for friendship's sake.  
 A modest grey square, yet so boundlessly precious —  
 More lustrous it seems than gold,  
 Lit up by its kinship with Soviet steel works  
 Two and a half decades old.  
 Youth long-departed, I met you this morning,  
 Though as the steel that you cast;  
 This first-born of India's darling, Bhilai,  
 Shines bright with the glow of our glorious past.*

India was the first to discover steel. This was at the dawn of our era. The famous Damascus sword was forged of Indian steel. The six-ton metal pillar in Delhi was erected in the 3rd century. The tropical heat, the downpours and the dry winds have not affected it at all. The secret of how it was made is unknown to this day. But because colonialists ruled India, she entered the latter half of the 20th century—an epoch of flowering science and technology—with a backward economy. She had no heavy industry of her own, and no engineering.

Figures, they say, are dull. But it is impossible to grasp socio-economic processes, unless you turn to figures.

For example, India produces a mere 1,700,000 tons of steel a year. That is obviously too little for her industry! So she has to spend Rs 1,500 million in foreign currency per annum for imported steel.

“Not bad,” say the agents of the Western monopolies. “And better still if we sell more steel to the Indians.”

“An aftermath of colonialism,” say the Soviet people.

“What a disastrous shortage of steel! The Indians must be



helped to build steel plants and become independent of foreigners."

"The Indians have decided to raise steel production to 6,000,000 tons by 1961," rage the monopolists. "We are losing a good market! Disastrous! The Russians have built them Bhilai. That is 'international communism' at its subversive worst!"

"Hail to our Indian friends," say the Soviet people. "We are ready to help them raise Bhilai's output from one to two-and-a-half million tons a year. Bhilai iron and steel means tractors for the Indian tiller, lathes and machines, rails and locomotives."

The first fruit of persevering labour and fraternal co-operation with the Soviet Union—steel marked "Made in Bhilai"—has appeared in the Indian market.

Near the Presidential Palace in Delhi rise government buildings made of pink stone. One of them, the Ministry of Steel, works almost round the clock. Cars of the Soviet Ambassador, of his Economic Councillor, of Soviet and Indian specialists come from Bhilai to report, are often seen parked outside it. The Ministry handles problems of utmost importance for new India.

"What problems?" we asked a prominent Ministry official.

"Lots of problems," he replied, "and as many more difficulties. You know of the legacy we were left by the colonialists. They retarded our development for several centuries. Suffice it to say that we have no heavy engineering, no lathe and tractor industry of our own to this day.—What this means? It means being dependent and exhausting our material resources."

After a pause he continued:

"But we've made some progress—chiefly within the state-operated economic sector. A locomotive plant is working to capacity in Chittaranjan, and a railway car plant in Pirambur, near Madras. We put out a few tens of thousands of automobiles a year. Those are just the first

shoots. But we trust that with your help they will grow into a flowering orchard. Our climate is excellent!"

Yes, the Indian "climate" is indeed helpful in growing that orchard. The country has 21,000 million tons of high-quality iron ore, 120,000 million tons of coal, 50 million kw of hydropower resources, and these are just the first and far from complete estimates of the prospected natural wealth of India found over a short period. Who can tell how much more undiscovered and unexplored wealth, concealed through the centuries in the bowels of Indian soil, is still there for the taking?

Yet in spite of this incalculable wealth metal consumption in India per head of population is no more than 5.5 kilogrammes. In Britain it is 270 kilogrammes. India's power consumption per head of population is 15 kw-h, while it is 1,100 kw-h in Britain.

Until recently all of the Indian oil-extracting and refining industry was controlled by British and American interests.

K. D. Malaviya, Minister for Natural Resources, said that as a child he had heard old men tell legends about mysterious oily spots floating on the water in Indian wells, and about eternal fires bursting from inside the earth. As a student he realised what this meant. "We have oil," he reported to Nehru after India's independence. "We must drive for domestic oil," he repeatedly declared in the Indian Parliament.

We had the good fortune once of visiting Mr. Malaviya at his home. He was in his garden, studying the latest Reserve Bank of India reports. An extension telephone stood beside him on a stool. It kept ringing continuously.

"Tell Caltex," the Minister said, "that we can't pay their high prices for gasoline. No! No! I'll raise the matter with the Parliament!"

"No, I'm not going to strike any deals," he said. "Who do they think they are dealing with? Yes. That's settled."



I shall go to Moscow and Bucharest—I'm sure, they'll help us."

The telephone was silent for a minute. Malaviya, a soft-spoken man of medium height with expressive and soft features, looks like a college professor. When he speaks of oil his eyes begin to sparkle.

The phone rang again.

"Here, read this while I answer it," he said, handing us the bluish sheets of the bank report chock-full of figures.

Ponder on these figures, reader!

In 1948, foreign investments in India's oil industry added up to Rs 10,000,000. By 1955 they had risen more than 28-fold. All the shares of the oil refineries in India are owned by foreigners!

India spends Rs 800,000,000 for oil annually. The net profits of the foreign oil monopolies amount to Rs 100,000,000. The country's oil needs today add up to 6,000,000 tons. Of these only about 500,000 tons are extracted in the country.

When Malaviya was finally done with the more urgent business he told us that Nehru and his government were determined to go through with the oil-prospecting programme of the state sector in spite of the furious resistance put up by the agents of the foreign monopolies.

"We are convinced," he concluded, "that your country is a genuine friend and that you will help us. We have asked the Soviet Government to send us specialists for consultation and prospecting in India. They have already begun work."

Some time later Indian newspapers printed the report submitted by the Soviet experts, who had completed prospecting. The area where oil and gas deposits were thought likely, the report said, amounted to 1,042,000 square kilometres. It embraced parts of Assam, the West Bengal basin, Punjab, Kashmir, Rajasthan, Cambay, the Ganges valley, the seaboard of Madras, Andhra, Kerala and the Andaman Islands.

Drilling was begun with Soviet aid, and the results were highly gratifying. In 1958 industrial gas was found in the Jawalamukhi district of the State of Punjab, just as the Soviet experts had predicted.

A few weeks after Khrushchov visited India, oil spouted from the fifth of the Cambay wells. The Indian patriots were jubilant. Prime Minister Nehru flew to Cambay.

He showed a great interest in the Soviet drilling installations and spoke to Soviet and Indian specialists, lavishing high praise upon their efforts. He also said it was desirable to launch industrial oil extraction in the district and to extend prospecting to the adjacent areas.

Jawaharlal Nehru named the Soviet Uralmashzavod drilling machine which had helped to reach the wealth hidden for centuries in the bowels of Cambay, "Pobeda"—the Russian for victory. Accordingly, an inscription, "Pobeda", has been made on it in Hindi and Russian. The machine was operated by Ovanes Akopov, a Soviet driller.

On returning to Delhi, Nehru proudly showed the brown stains of Cambay oil on his white jacket.

"I'll wear this jacket in Parliament," he said.

Eager to speed the country's economic development, the Indian Government works on long-term five-year plans in face of the resistance of Western monopoly agents, drawing upon the experience of the socialist countries. Planning is highly popular in India.

The second Indian five-year plan ended in March 1961. Of the total Rs72,000 million invested, the state sector accounted for 48,000 million, or twice as much as the private sector.

But foreign monopoly domination in some of the country's key economic sectors, the survivals of feudalism in the countryside, financial difficulties and a shortage of technical personnel, impede the progress of India's national economy.

Capitalist monopolies, primarily American, make the most of India's financial and exchange difficulties to exert



economic pressure upon that country. They are urging the Indian Government to revise its economic policy and abandon the priority development of the state sector.

India's economic development is therefore getting to be more and more of a problem. The more far-sighted of her statesmen and politicians realise that they need a policy emphasising development of a domestic heavy industry, extension of the state sector and transformation of the countryside.

The discussion of India's third five-year plan was politically acute. The battle of opinions over the basic problems of economic development in the next five years concentrated on three main issues—the volume and distribution of investment between the state and private sectors, sources of funds to finance the plan, and the development of some of the economic branches. Spokesmen of the Indian and foreign monopolies make repeated assaults upon the economic policy of the Indian Government, aimed as it is at invigorating the state sector.

A few days before Khrushchov's arrival in Delhi we visited the Indian Planning Commission.

"What could you tell us, newspapermen, about the third five-year plan?" we asked an economic consultant.

"To begin with," he said with a smile, "I can tell you that we are pleased with the plan. Do you want to criticise us or help to give it publicity?"

"We want the key targets and ideas of the plan, for we want to tell Soviet readers about them," we replied. "They show a great interest in the Indian five-year plans; especially so in view of Khrushchov's coming visit to your country."

"I apologise," the consultant said with a trace of embarrassment. "I've grown accustomed to thinking that newspapermen always mean trouble. The American and British press, and even many of the Indian newspapers, attack our plans for all they are worth. Our press, you know, is con-

trolled almost entirely by the private sector. The attacks follow in close succession."

The Indian consultant took a sheaf of notes from his drawer.

"We're allocating Rs 100,000 million for the third five-year plan," he began, "with 67 per cent going to the state sector. Output of ferrous metals, key chemicals, electric power and coal is to go up steeply. We propose to manufacture many types of plant and machinery. This will enable our national industry to meet India's needs in industrial equipment to the extent of some 75 per cent. Those are the corner-stones of the third five-year plan—a phase in India's advance to complete independence."

It may be recalled that the Soviet-Indian economic agreement signed in Delhi is to assist India in solving those big tasks.

Western correspondents asked us Soviet journalists repeatedly:

"Why do you write so affectionately about Bhilai? You probably do it for propaganda."

"Yes, we are propagandising Bhilai," we replied, "because it is an example of the new relations between peoples."

### **THE STRONG MEN OF BHILAI**

Early in the morning of February 14 two planes, an IL-14 and a Dakota, took off from Palam Airport in Delhi and headed south-west for Madhya Pradesh, the biggest state of the Indian Union.

Soon the despondent, sun-scorched plain gave way to green tracts of forest—the jungle and the famous teak woods of Madhya Pradesh. The latter cover more than a third of the state. Magnificent monuments of the Ashoka Empire dating back more than two thousand years have survived there. Among them are the ruins of the fascinat-



ing ancient Tripuri, the cave temples of Khajuraho whose sculptures are dedicated to the love cult, the temples of Man Mandir, Sas-bahu and Teli, the magnificent Gwalior fort hued out of the cliffs, the caves of Udayeshwar, the Maidsaur tower, the ancient Ujjain observatory, and the famous sepulchre of Hoshang Shah.

The plane motors roared. We lost no time and read up on the press. The papers were full of Khrushchov's visit. There was a detailed story of his visit to Suratgarh—an array of photographs and editorials. We turned to other reports. A French atomic bomb was exploded on February 13. The Indian papers wrote indignantly about the Sahara being turned into an African Hiroshima. No country, the papers said, had the right to imperil the lives of people with that sort of dangerous experiment. The colonialists want to intimidate the Eastern peoples with nuclear weapons. A futile scheme. The chains of slavery will not be mended by either bayonets or bombs.

The East has emerged upon a new road. And the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh derives its fame not only from its monuments. Bhilai is its glory in our day. It will turn the area into the "industrial heart of India".

The planes landed at Raipur airfield.

All along the road from the airfield to Bhilai, Khrushchov and his party were welcomed warmly by people from the surrounding villages, the city of Raipur, the Durg railway station that the Russian builders of Bhilai rechristened "*Drug*", the Russian for friend. Soviet and Indian flags wherever you looked, and the unfailing and powerful slogan "*Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!*"

The first we saw of Bhilai were its tall chimneys. Then we came to Bhilainagar, the steel town sprawling over many kilometres.

We had had many exciting receptions in India, but the one in Bhilai was truly the most exciting demonstration of Indian-Soviet friendship.

The entire population of Bhilainagar, Indians and Soviet

people, with their families, dressed in holiday clothes, faces shining, turned out to meet the head of the Soviet Government. Beside the Indian workers in their bright national garb and colourful turbans stood steelworkers from Zaporozhye, men from the Urals, from Moscow and Leningrad. There was a sustained hum of welcome.

"Namaste!"

"Hallo, Nikita Sergeyevich!"

Words of hearty welcome were inscribed on arcs adorned with garlands of flowers, on posters carried by the populace. They were in the hearts and on the lips of tens of thousands of people.

In the yard of the hotel where the Soviet visitors were to stay, Khrushchov was welcomed by the families of the Soviet specialists.

"Hallo, Nikita Sergeyevich! Greetings from Muscovites."

"Where are you from?" Khrushchov asked one of the women.

"Moscow."

"And you?"

"I come from Tagil."

"And I from Magnitogorsk."

"Zhdanov."

"I thought you said Muscovites!" Khrushchov joked.

"We're mostly from the Donets Basin," someone remarked.

"In that case I can say hallo to you in Ukrainian," Khrushchov said. "*Shchiro vitayu!*"

"*Dyakuyemo*, (thank you)!" came the reply.

The Raipur *Mahakoshal* had a banner headline in Russian: "*Privetstvuyem*", welcome. Its editor presented a copy of the paper to Khrushchov.

In the afternoon, Khrushchov and his party went on a tour of the Bhilai Works. Again thousands of townsmen bid him a warm welcome.

Mothers and fathers lifted their children high in the air. The kiddies waved Soviet and Indian flags. Their eager



eyes impressed a vivid page of Bhilai history upon their memories.

The car with Khrushchov in it broke out of the human corridor at long last and drove up to the works gates. Bulldozers and tip-up lorries, the pioneers of the Bhilai project, stood there in several rows. Their drivers had turned on the klaxons and clambered up on their hoods.

"A Bhilai salute to the head of the Soviet Government!" the Indians shouted.

The tour of the giant steel works began at the blast furnaces. Molten iron poured into an immense ladle marked "Uralmashzavod, U.S.S.R." We recalled the day in 1955 when Prime Minister Nehru, visiting the Urals Engineering Works—Uralmashzavod—asked the Soviet workers:

"Will you send us the same sort of equipment?"

"Yes," said the Uralmashzavod workers, "even better!"

The Soviet working class has always kept its word. The Bhilai Works has been sent first-class equipment.

Khrushchov made a tour of the works in a motor-car. He was welcomed enthusiastically wherever he went. Draughtsman Sharma showed Khrushchov his portrait at the entrance to one of the shops. Sharma had drawn it himself, putting into it all his skill and affection for the head of the Soviet Government. Khrushchov thanked the young artist and autographed the portrait.

Accompanied by Shrivastava, the General Manager of the Bhilai Steel Works, and by the Soviet and Indian specialists, Khrushchov inspected the open-hearth furnaces. Soviet specialists working there were presented to him. They had come from Ukrainian steel plants—the Petrovsky Works of Dniepropetrovsk, Zaporozhstal of Zaporozhye and the Donetsk Iron and Steel Works.

The shop superintendent, Mr. N. M. Ghosh, said:

"This is one of the best plants in India."

"I would say," Khrushchov replied smiling, "that it could have been one of the best plants in the Soviet Union."

Ghosh, who had had practical training in the U.S.S.R.

with other Indian specialists, told the head of the Soviet Government of his impressions of the iron-and-steel plant in Chelyabinsk.

"The Chelyabinsk plant, like other similar plants," Khrushchov observed, "was built a quarter of a century ago. The plants we are building now are much better."

Khrushchov viewed the molten iron through a smoked glass. In reply to his questions, Ghosh explained:

"We produce 250 tons of steel in ten or eleven hours. Eighty per cent of the charge is hot iron and 20 per cent is scrap."

The interpreter translated the word "scrap" as "iron waste".

"Your translation is wrong," Khrushchov remarked. "He's not talking about waste, but about scrap. Scrap is iron which has already done duty and is used to make steel."

"At no other plant is hot iron used in so high a proportion," Ghosh continued. "Our hot iron is very good—it has a very low sulphur content."

"That depends on the quality of the ore and coke," Khrushchov said. "You probably have very good ore, without admixtures of sulphur and phosphorus, or else their content must be very low. I was very closely associated with steel-making at one time. I studied ferrous metallurgy at the Industrial Academy."

"I can see from what you say that you have a good knowledge of metallurgy," Ghosh said.

"Yes, I know a bit about it."

"We're very happy to see you here."

"I am happier than you to be among you."

"Look at the faces of the people—how joyously they welcome you," Ghosh exclaimed.

Sparks of steel flared up as the molten metal poured into the ladle. The crowd of workers, Soviet and Indian, standing shoulder to shoulder, applauded the head of the Soviet Government. Khrushchov remarked:



"That's the heart of the country!"

"Our co-operation with the Russian specialists," Ghosh observed, "is sincere and thorough. We work in close contact."

"I am pleased. That is how it should be."

"That is how it is," Ghosh affirmed.

"The atmosphere here," Shrivastava said, "is indeed very good and friendly. Everybody notices it. Even foreigners who come here. Our unity is evident not only in common labour, but in the club as well, and in the dining-rooms and the hotel where the Soviet specialists live."

"What is the ore content in the blast furnace?" Khrushchov asked.

An Indian specialist said: "Twenty-five to thirty per cent."

"No," Khrushchov replied, "I did not ask about the percentage of ore to coke and flux. What I asked about was the percentage of iron in the ore you use for the blast furnace."

"The ferrous content is 65 to 68 per cent. We have very good ore," the specialist said.

"Indeed," Khrushchov replied, "you have a monopoly on such excellent ore."

"Within a few years we shall have used up the good ore," said the specialist, "and shall have to use poorer ore."

"I am certain you will find still better ore in India," Khrushchov retorted.

"We have already found new deposits of good ore in the vicinity," Shrivastava remarked.

"We have a monopoly of many raw materials, but we do not have our own machines," the Indian specialist added.

"The time will come when you will learn to build excellent machines," Khrushchov said with a smile.

The senior Soviet specialist in the open-hearth shop introduced Khrushchov to Pokhri, an Indian steelworker,

and Kurochkin, a Soviet steelworker, who had produced a record smelting in honour of the Soviet visitors under the supervision of Indian foreman Pilai.

Khrushchov shook hands with them, congratulated them, and wished them fresh success.

As we emerged from the open-hearth shop we met Amar Singh, a deputy to the Indian Parliament. His precinct is near Bhilai. This was the second time he was elected deputy. We asked him to tell us his impressions of Khrushchov's visit to India.

"It is a goodwill visit," he said, "good for the people of Bhilai, and for all the Indian people. We, deputies of the Indian Parliament, call Mr. Khrushchov the herald of peace. When I learned that he was coming to Bhilai, I decided to fête him with gifts from my voters, who have produced hand-spun fabrics embellished with national ornaments. Today, I have yet another reason to be happy—Mr. Khrushchov has invited me to visit the Soviet Union."

Khrushchov also visited the rolling mill. It has a blooming that can roll 2,500,000 tons of stock a year. It bears the Uralmashzavod trade mark in block letters.

"Is the mill entirely ready?" Khrushchov asked.

Shrivastava replied that the blooming had been put into operation on November 7, 1959, stressing that this was "an auspicious date".

Certainly! It was the 42nd anniversary of the Great October Revolution, which ushered in a new era in man's history.

The General Manager of the Bhilai Works introduced the senior Soviet specialist at the rolling mill, Nikolai Protasov, to Khrushchov. Protasov reminded Khrushchov that he had met him nearly 12 years before at the Azovstal Plant.

"Yes, indeed," Khrushchov said, "I was there in 1948 when the rail-rolling mill was put into operation."

"I accompanied you then as well," Protasov recalled.

"I remember—I remember," Khrushchov said, and shook Protasov's hand vigorously.



Some of us had met Protasov, tireless, volatile, with an open kind face. Two months earlier he and his assistants had started up the billet mill.

We saw him near the blooming, surrounded by young Indians who had recently returned from training at Soviet plants. He is one of the many Soviet specialists who gave labour, strength and time unstintingly to the Indian people, helping them to build up their national industry.

Before the war, Protasov, a prominent rolling-mill operator of Azovstal, had worked at the Magnitogorsk plant. Then he had fought in the war, the end of which he celebrated in the German town of Bismarck. That was where the Allied forces of the U.S.S.R. and Britain made contact. That memorable day the soldiers and officers of the two armies swore to devote themselves to the prevention of another war. Where are you, the British soldiers, who took this pledge with the Soviet men? How well are you keeping your word?

"I was loyal to my oath when I helped to rehabilitate Azovstal, which was destroyed by the Nazis," said Nikolai Protasov, "and when I went to Bhilai I was determined to demonstrate with my labour to my comrades of the British army that I was still loyal to the oath we took together in Bismarck. Bhilai is a peace project."

"What do you expect to do after the Bhilai Works is completed?" we asked Protasov.

"We'll turn over the works, our experience and our knowledge to these lads," he said pointing to the young Indian specialists. "They are fine lads, intelligent, and eager. Once they take over the bloomings and rolling mills they will stand at the head of the country, leading it to complete economic independence. As for us, we'll go back—there are new building projects at home. I have no doubt whatsoever that the Indian workers and specialists will live up to the high standards set in Bhilai. Am I right?"

"Hear, hear," the youths replied in unison. They had mastered the Russian language quite well in the few years

they had spent in the Soviet Union and during their joint work with the Soviet specialists in Bhilai.

"Fifty men from our shop have been trained in the Soviet Union," blooming operator Chanda said. "We had no idea of rolling before we went, and are now, according to the Russians, full-blown specialists. We are very grateful for the training we have had in the Soviet Union, and to our teacher, Azovstal blooming operator, Nikolai Popov."

Shift foreman Shiva Mohan Shrivastava, a namesake of the Bhilai Works General Manager, approached us. He had also had training in the Soviet Union, at the plants in Zhdanov, Makeyevka and Krivoi Rog.

"In the Soviet Union," the Indian engineer said, "I received excellent technical training. I would like to thank Khrushchov, the head of the Soviet Government, for the efforts he makes in behalf of peace and progress in countries with underdeveloped economies."

In the evenings amateur circles are busy at the clubs. A jazz orchestra formed by the Soviet specialists, rehearses its programme. A song made up at the works, a waltz called *Bhilai Friendship*, is especially popular in Bhilainagar. The song sprang up spontaneously, wrought by life itself, by the common labour of Soviet and Indian people.

Impressive facts of Bhilai friendship are evident at each step.

Kadir Islamov, who grew up in an Uzbek orphan's home, was 15 years old when the war began. Though he pleaded and begged, the Army would not take him. He was too young, and was advised to go to work so he could do his bit for his country.

That was the start of Kadir's industrial career. He learned the difficult trade of electrician and responded to his



country's call in rehabilitating the war-demolished plants in Makeyevka, Zaporozhye and Krivoi Rog. Today he is well known—even in Bhilai where he is now employed.

Valuable electric equipment from the Soviet Union was piled high in the open on the building site of the rolling mill in the summer of 1959. People thought there was ample time, before the monsoon rains, to transfer it to the roofed premises of the shop. But nature has its whims. One evening Maskaranis, the Indian foreman, came running to Kadir.

"We're in trouble!" he shouted. "The monsoon is coming. We haven't a minute to waste! We've got to get the equipment out of the rain!"

Time was short. Kadir summoned Maskaranis's team and called for the cranes. Within a few hours the men accomplished a job that should have taken a week. The electric machines, some weighing 30 tons, were saved!

It is thanks to this valiant effort and the labour of all the Bhilai builders that the rolling mill was put into operation in good time.

Khrushchov visited the machine hall where Kadir and Maskaranis worked. He was told that they had begun installing the machinery on November 25 and the hall was started up on December 5. Rolling was begun on December 13.

"Well done!" said Khrushchov.

The machine hall was clean, brightly lit and entirely automated. The Indians working at the control panel were dressed in snow-white shirts.

The mechanics of the rail-rolling mill were headed by Harban Singh. He comes from Amritsar, the town where the tragedies that Krishna Chandra related to us, occurred in 1919. It was that tragic year that Harban Singh was born.

The people were poverty-stricken and underfed. Harban Singh left his father's home in search of bread and a handful of rice when still a boy. Hardships and privations

dogged him when he worked in Abadan for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the subsidiaries of the American Stanvac and Caltex oil monopolies, and the Indian factories owned by capitalists.

In Bhilai, Harban Singh became a mechanic. He works with Vitaly Shelyaga, a Soviet foreman. Shelyaga finished a trade school in the Donets Basin ten years before and went to work in the building trade. By the time he came to Bhilai he was an experienced foreman.

"I am very glad," Harban Singh told us, "that I had the good fortune to meet a man like Vitaly. A fine man, a man who knows his business! He and his fellows have no secrets from us. They are glad to teach us and share their vast store of experience with us."

They stood side by side—the Bhilai friends, Kadir Islamov and Maskaranis, Harban Singh and Vitaly Shelyaga—and applauded Khrushchov as he was leaving the mill.

"Long live Khrushchov!" Maskaranis exclaimed in Russian.

"Hail Russia!" Harban Singh chimed in.

"Regards to our fellow countrymen!" shouted Islamov and Shelyaga.

The visit to the plant took longer than expected. The Indians were worried about the rigorous time-table. But Khrushchov objected:

"I want to see how the coke ovens work."

"But you must be tired," said the Indian specialists.

"I feel fine whenever I come to a plant," Khrushchov said.

He was driven to the coke plant, where a group of young specialists trained at Soviet steel mills gave him a rousing welcome. They all had a good command of Russian and needed no interpreters. The senior in the group, Krishnaswami, gave the explanations. The plant had arranged an exhibition of samples of coal, coke and the by-products—tar, sulphuric acid, and ammonium sulphate, a fertiliser.



A lively conversation ensued between Khrushchov and the Indian specialists who accompanied him. Khrushchov asked about the quality of the coal.

"What is its heat value?"

"Eight thousand large calories."

"What is the ash content?"

"Sixteen to seventeen per cent."

"And the sulphur content?"

"Half per cent."

"It's good coal."

Khrushchov knocked a few pieces of coke together and listened to the sound they made.

"It's tough," he said, "good coke. Do you have much of the coal you use to make this coke?"

"Yes."

"But your specialists say that you do not have enough coking coal and difficulties may hence arise when the plant is extended."

"There's enough coal for the time being," Shrivastava remarked.

Khrushchov was shown the products of the chemical shops. He examined the samples thoroughly.

"In three months," Shrivastava said, "we'll produce more by-products."

"When I worked in the Donets Basin before the Revolution," Khrushchov recalled, "the coke ovens were different. The bosses cared only for the coke, and let the gas go to waste. Suddenly, I remember, a Belgian group made a staggering offer to the mineowner. They proposed to build new ovens and said he could take the coke and they would take the chemical waste. And that only for a few years, after which they would transfer the ovens into his possession. This showed how valuable the chemical waste was, which had previously been neglected. Today, everybody knows that chemicals are the main thing about coal. The chemicals obtained in the making of coke are much more valuable than the coke itself."

"We'll make use of all the by-products," Shrivastava remarked.

"The price of coke," one of the Indian specialists added, "should be about the same as that of coal, for the chemicals will amply cover the cost of producing it."

A large coal-handling crane—the latest thing of its kind—made in the Ukraine, came into motion at that moment beside the neighbouring building. Khrushchov watched its clever work. He waved his hand. The crane operator decided to hail Khrushchov his own way. He turned the crane several times round its axis with amazing skill and banged the halves of its scoop together, as though applauding.

Khrushchov turned to Shrivastava.

"I'm very pleased," he said. "The work here is well organised."

"It is all due to your co-operation," Shrivastava replied.

One of the Indian specialists added:

"It is all due to the common effort of two countries, to your being ready to help us."

"It is all due to the fine training we had in Russia," said a young Indian specialist trained in the U.S.S.R.

"I see that Indian and Soviet specialists are co-operating splendidly," Khrushchov observed.

"That is quite true," Shrivastava said.

"A good sign," Khrushchov remarked, "and it holds promise of a great future."

S. A. Skachkov, Chairman of the Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, who accompanied Khrushchov, said:

"Swaran Singh, the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel, said to me: 'We like the Soviet specialists because they never show that they know more than we do. They are very tactful people.'"

Khrushchov addressed the gathering:

"Our people treat you as brothers because they know and appreciate your position. There was a time when we were in the same position. I remember coming back to



the mine after the Civil War. We had to rehabilitate it, and had no engineers of our own. The Belgians who owned the mine, the coke ovens and the chemical plant had destroyed the blue prints before they left. . . . We had to put the enterprise back into operation as quickly as possible. This was in 1922. I was appointed Deputy Director of the mine, but I was a common worker then and had no technical knowledge, no idea of how to run a mine. We had learned well how to smash and oust the capitalists, but we had not yet learned at the time how to manage an economy. We accumulated that experience with time. It had not been easy, of course. We remember it, and when we see you having to cope with difficulties in organising production, as we had to in our day, we are quite eager to help."

The workers and engineers of the coke plant asked Khrushchov to pose with them for a group photograph.

"Well, photographers, d'you still have powder in your kegs?" Khrushchov asked.

"We're ready," the press photographers and cinema operators replied. The cameras clicked.

It was dusk when Khrushchov left the steel works and headed for the stadium of the Bhilai secondary school. Hundreds of Bhilai children were gathered there—Indian children in bright national costumes and the children of Soviet specialists in the traditional uniform of Soviet Young Pioneers.

The children gave their visitor a stirring welcome.

Indian girls placed garlands of living flowers round Khrushchov's neck, and the Soviet children presented him with bouquets. The Indians sang a hymn of welcome. The Soviet children chanted a traditional pioneer greeting. A boyish voice rang out.

*So dawns the day  
Of our great Soviet land;  
In all its vast magnificence it gleams.*

*The heights of Communism—within our reach they  
stand—  
The consummation of mankind's most cherished  
dreams.*

Then a girl, conquering her embarrassment, declaimed:

*Friends! There are millions of us in this world  
And ever louder sounds our rallying call:  
Arise, o men, arise and fight for peace  
That happiness at last may come to all.*

A boyish voice again:

"We know how untiringly and selflessly you fight for the cause of peace, dear Nikita Sergeyevich. We thank you on behalf of all Soviet people living in Bhilai!"

"Thank you!" everybody chimed in.

We heard a verse recited by a child about the birth of Bhilai:

*A hard-won victory it was,  
But friendship with the Indian people  
Came to our aid and helped us win.*

The audience at the stadium applauded the pioneers thunderously.

"Well done! Well done!" Khrushchov exclaimed.

"The number of speakers is amazing," said Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

"Excellent speakers at that!" Khrushchov added.

"Your praise," Ushakova, the head mistress of the school, said excitedly, "is a great reward to the children and to ourselves, the teachers."

The Indian school children performed a traditional dance and then gave a physical culture display. Their motions were nimble, delightful to look at, and well rehearsed. And all this against the setting of sparkling Bhilai lights. Night descended. The square was illumined with spotlights.



Khrushchov approached the microphone. He said:

"Dear friends, dear comrades, we have had the happy opportunity and the great honour of visiting Bhilai, a town of labour, iron and steel. I do not say that we have seen a lot; there was too little time. But we felt a lot more than we saw. We felt that big things were being done here. This does not only apply to the building of this big plant, but also to the building of friendship between our peoples. It is the strongest of friendships, which has sprung up through mutual co-operation and the joint effort in building the Bhilai Works. I should like to voice sincere thanks to the teachers of the Indian and Soviet schools who have worked out an excellent programme and, which is most important, are giving the children the desire to live in peace and friendship. . . . I want to thank the children, both Indian and Soviet, for their beautiful and delightful performance!

"I want to wish you children that you learn well—that you learn very well. I shan't ask who has good marks and who has excellent marks. But think about it yourself; anyone who has fair marks ought to work for good ones, and those who have good marks ought to work for excellent marks."

Voices resound on the square:

"We'll do it! We'll do it!"

Khrushchov continued:

"You must learn well and do your homework well, obey your teachers and show a good example wherever you are—at school, at home or in the street."

"Thank you!"

"Good-bye! Thank you! *Namaste!*" Khrushchov said.

"*Bon voyage,*" came the reply. "*Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!*"

Words of greeting sounded for some time yet. Young Indians and the Soviet children whose fathers had not only built the wonderful Bhilai Works but also tempered the friendship of our peoples with Bhilai steel repeated them over and over again.

During Khrushchov's stay in Bhilai the Protasov family met the head of the Soviet Government. It turned out that Olya, Protasov's nine-year-old daughter, had taken part in the festival given for Khrushchov.

"She recited poetry," Olya's mother said.

"Mother's poetry," the girl remarked modestly and showed us a sheet of paper with the lines in bold handwriting, titled *Poem*.

"It isn't for print, of course," Natalya Protasova explained. "It only contains our sentiments. I've never written poetry before."

The simple words on the sheet of notebook paper may not, indeed, sound good to poets and writers. But they reflected the glow of India's first hot metal and were illuminated by the fires of a heroically built steel works.

*Our people worked in earnest  
And never spared their strength  
Until in friendly India  
That plant grew up at length.  
Each gave his heart without reserve  
The common goal to gain.  
Our friendship with new India  
Shall live through drought and rain.*

Picture a sun-scorched land with blast and open-hearth furnaces built on it, and picture the people who did not spare their strength, enduring heat and downpours, to build them, and you will perhaps say: "Well done!"

### HIGH GRADE

No one slept in Bhilai on the night of February 14. Fireworks soared into the sky. The sounds of a Russian harmonica drifted in from afar, echoed by Indian drums beating festive rhythmical tunes. The plant worked as usual. From



time to time the incisive glow of molten steel rose into the black southern sky.

A dinner for Soviet and Indian specialists was held at the Bhilai Hotel, attended by Khrushchov and other Soviet guests.

Manubhai Shah, Minister for Industry, thanked the Soviet specialists heartily for their help in building the Bhilai Works, a symbol of friendship.

Then Khrushchov took the floor. He spoke at length about the selfless assistance rendered by the socialist states to the Eastern countries and demonstrated its marked difference from the "aid" extended by the capitalist states.

"What we are doing is inconceivable for the capitalist countries," Khrushchov said. "You will say that two other iron-and-steel works are going up in India besides the Bhilai Plant and that they are being built with the help of capitalist countries. But why are the latter willing to help? I don't know what interest you are paying for their help, but I know perfectly well that capitalists are incapable of rendering disinterested help. The capitalists are intent, above everything else, on getting a profit out of their investment. They never invest capital unless they get a profit. Every capitalist firm, every capitalist bank, thinks mostly of how much and how it will profit from the deal when it signs economic aid agreements with other countries.

"But that isn't all either. Giving effective economic assistance to underdeveloped countries, as the socialist countries do, is inconceivable for the capitalists because they realise that the more they help the backward countries build up their own industry and become economically independent from the highly developed capitalist countries, the worse it will be for the imperialists. The underdeveloped countries will then gradually build up their own industry, learn to manufacture all the things which they now have to buy abroad, and the imperialists will lose markets in the underdeveloped countries. 'Why should we act that

way?' say the capitalists. 'That would be utterly foolish!' And they try to organise their 'aid' in a way as to increase the dependence of the underdeveloped countries upon the capitalist states.

"The socialist countries have no such apprehensions," Khrushchov continued. "We run our economy according to a plan, basing it on our internal resources and the possibility of buying some of the goods abroad, including trade exchanges with the capitalist countries. We think it right to trade with all countries that wish to maintain normal economic relations with us. This is why we are not afraid of your becoming our competitors after we help you to develop your economy and raise the living standard. On the contrary, we are helping you to get on your feet, because we know that when you are completely independent and strong economically you will make better use of your wealth to satisfy the needs of your people, and will trade with us. There is thus complete harmony in the development of your country and ours.

"No doubt, you follow the speeches of foreign leaders. I have read Harriman's speech made after he visited India, the statements of some of the other American leaders, and articles on this score by American journalists, and I have gathered the impression that they are panic-stricken over what they have seen here. After seeing Bhilai and the other enterprises built with our help, they fear that the socialist mode of production will probably appeal more to the Indians than the capitalist, and that then God would prompt you to take the socialist path. But we are not urging you to take our path at all! Although, admittedly, we would welcome it. But, God beware, I do not by any means propagandise that outcome. Choice of social system is your own affair.

"Well, the American leaders now say roundly that the United States must help India economically, lest she abandon the 'free world'. What they describe as the 'free world' is capitalist slavery. They describe our system as commu-



nist slavery. But one can say whatever one pleases. Let the opponents of socialism and communism try to provide the peoples, all the citizens of their countries, with the political rights and freedoms that exist in our country. Let them provide the right to work, to rest and leisure, to education, and abolish the rights of a small handful of exploiters to oppress the working people. The capitalist world, ruled by the right of the strong to oppress the weak, where hunger, poverty and unemployment are a scourge for the people—that is where you see modern slavery.

“The ideologists of imperialism suggest that the U.S. Government increase its economic aid to India. Here is how we look at it: Let them give you more capital. They have plundered and exploited the colonial peoples enough. Let them now give you back at least part of the wealth they have plundered from you.

“You might say: Communist Khrushchov has come to us and is extolling his own system and maligning the capitalist. But I am making no secret of the fact that I am a Communist. As you know, I am the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I do not here represent the Du Ponts, the Harrimans or the Rockefellers, but my own socialist country, my working people. I am proud of my country, of its economy and culture. That is why I do not beat about the bush and candidly say here what I think.

“In the complicated situation where the socialist countries are forging ahead of the capitalist countries, the capitalists fear that the ground is slipping from under their feet. That is why they want to fight for the soul of India, Burma, Indonesia and other countries and are ready to give them some handouts. But if, for example, they do give you back three cents under the guise of aid out of every dollar they have plundered from you, they do it not because they really want to help you as man to man, but because we are giving you help and they want to oppose

their own 'aid' to socialist assistance. This, too, must be borne in mind."

The gathering followed Khrushchov's speech with unflagging attention. It was heard by the gathering and broadcast over the radio throughout Bhilai. It was a talk with thousands of Bhilai people—a forthright and friendly talk.

"I remember speaking in Madras four years ago at the Governor's dinner," Khrushchov said. "I spoke then about the importance of industrialisation, and the Governor hastened to come out against it. He said then that this was not the Soviet Union, but India, and added that it was more important for the Indians to develop handicrafts rather than a heavy industry. But you cannot get very far on handicrafts. Unless you develop its heavy industry, you will never develop the economy of the country as a whole, and consequently never improve its standard of living. All these things are not only interconnected, but concomitant."

Stormy applause broke out once more in the hall. How could steelworkers fail to understand what a powerful industry means to the country? After all, they were devoting all their strength, all their capacities, to solving the problem of India's industrialisation—the key problem of her economic progress.

The dinner was long over. It was a late Bhilai night. Stars twinkled overhead and the glow of molten steel rose against the setting of a dark sky.

In the third-floor linen-room at the Bhilai Hotel, heaped with bed-clothes and blankets, a correspondent spoke loudly into the telephone.

"Hallo, Moscow!"

He was phoning a report to his paper.

"Moscow!"

A few pages were left when the line went dead.

The correspondent tugged at the wire and yelled hoarsely.



People came down the corridor.

"What's going on here? You'll wake everybody up!"

But when they saw it was a newspaper correspondent they shut the door.

"Stop... Take down the spelling... Para..."

Among the numerous newspapers and journals that we saw each day in the various cities, we came across the issue of *Indian Foreign Affairs* devoted to the mission of friendship of the Soviet Premier to the Asian countries.

"Khrushchov," the journal said, "can always feel the pulse of the people, of his own country as well as those toiling to carry on the flame of life in other countries of the world.... He always tries to be in the midst of the masses and to understand their thoughts and moods."

"In his own country," the journal went on, "he knows thousands of workers, collective farmers, engineers and others scattered miles away in its different parts. He distinctly remembers the people with whom he was associated at any time, be it in the elementary school in his native village half a century ago, or on the construction of Moscow's underground railway in the beginning of the thirties."

We could not help recalling these lines on the morning of February 15. Bhilai awakened with the first rays of the sun. They lit up the magnificent plant, the homes of Bhilainagar, and sparkled brightly in the morning dew on the lush southern flowers in the gardens.

The numerous Soviet specialists and their families gathered outside the Bhilai Hotel, where Khrushchov had spent the night.

Khrushchov made a sudden appearance in the thick of the group. A friendly talk ensued. Khrushchov met compatriots with whom he had worked at one time in the Ukraine after the Civil War. He spoke of the Donets Basin and told people how he had begun working in the mines when still a boy. He recalled old Yuzovka, now the city of Donetsk, the big coke plant, the mine in Devyataya

Vetka, his old friends, and, in particular, Mikhail Volosevich, a rolling mill operator.

"Do you remember Derevyanko?" asked the wife of Pavlov, a Soviet specialist.

"I do," Khrushchov replied. "Tell him that I even remember the story about him and a prosecutor. I was once sent to Bolshoi Yanisol with a report. We came to a village and stopped at the local Soviet. That is where we met Ivan Petrovich Derevyanko. One day a prosecutor came to the village and demanded that Derevyanko provide him with horses. Derevyanko said he wouldn't give him any. The prosecutor made a row. 'I look after the law,' he said. Derevyanko said: 'There are laws, but no horses.' He was a brave Bolshevik and a man of principle. As for Misha Volosevich—he was an excellent chap and a pigeon enthusiast."

Speaking about old Yuzovka, Khrushchov recalled:

"Remember the theatre next to the town garden? There was a doss-house on that spot before the Revolution. Later, the house was turned into a hostel for us, workers' school students. We organised workshops and brought the boiler for the heating on our own backs."

Khrushchov then turned and asked the woman he was talking to for her name. She replied:

"Pavlova, but I was Amelina before I was married."

"Your pronunciation is half-Russian and half-Ukrainian, the same as mine," Khrushchov said.

"My family comes from the Ukraine," Pavlova explained. "My father's still there. He used to work in the Devyataya-bis mine."

One of the women addressed Khrushchov:

"My daughter has been saying all morning that she wants to meet Uncle Khrushchov."

"Very well," Khrushchov said smiling to the girl, "let's get acquainted."

The girl looked up at him shyly.

"What's your name?" Khrushchov asked.



"Natasha," the girl replied in a whisper.

"If I had known that I'd meet you here," Khrushchov said patting her golden hair, "I would have brought my grandson Nikita to Bhilai."

This was how the heart-to-heart, we might even say family, talk proceeded in the Bhilainagar street.

The meetings in Bhilai were unforgettable. We fell in love with the young sprawling steelmakers' town in the Indian steppe.

*Live with the smell of newborn steel  
Wrought by the working class,  
The fields around recall the steppes  
Of coal-mining Donbas.  
Bhilai Steel Works, fully-grown  
Breathe far on the horizon.  
Strange, yet half-native to the guest—  
This steppe he rests his eyes on.  
The guest has many urgent tasks,  
And many nations need him,  
Yet here he stands—a friend of all  
Who come to meet and greet him.  
He spoke not of the sights and scenes  
Of Paris and New York,  
But of the miners of his youth  
With whom he used to work.  
And boundless vistas opened up:  
The plain, from end to end,  
Seemed populated, every inch,  
By countrymen and friends.  
My comrade, let us not forget  
The example set us then  
By one whose heart warms constantly  
With kindness towards all men,  
Who carries friendship through the fog  
Of diplomatic joists*

*And like a miner's lamp, high up  
Its shining standard hoists.*

It was time to go to the meeting. Tens of thousands of Bhilai people, and peasants from the neighbouring villages, had gathered in the square near the hotel. Yet more newcomers were pouring in. A procession of festively clad people approached. Cyclists arrived in a never-ending stream. We glimpsed a family of five on a bicycle. The vast square turned into an ocean of heads.

The meeting was opened by Manubhai Shah, India's Minister for Industry. He welcomed Khrushchov on behalf of the Bhilai personnel, the people and the Government of India.

Shrivastava, the General Manager of the Bhilai Steel Works, presented Khrushchov with a souvenir—an ingot of steel made at Bhilai on the day of the first open-hearth smelting. The ingot was inscribed: "BSW (Bhilai Steel Works), Oct. 10, 1959." Khrushchov thanked Shrivastava and the works personnel warmly for the gift.

He greeted the mass meeting, saying "Namaste" to the Indians, "Zdravstvuite" to the Russians and "Zdorovenki buly" to the Ukrainians. Thousands of answers resounded.

"Namaste!"

"Zdravstvuite!"

"Zdorovenki buly!"

"Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!"

The people of Bhilai heard the head of the Soviet Government with bated breath. Khrushchov thanked everybody for their splendid hospitality.

"Your plant," Khrushchov said, "is a symbol of the indestructible friendship and co-operation between our countries.... Here the contours of the future of India as a developed industrial power are clearly visible. And indeed, when you look at the factory buildings, at the metallurgists' town that has sprung up on a spot where there



was nothing before, when you speak to the workers and engineers of the Bhilai Works you have a still clearer picture of India's future."

Khrushchov's words resounded all over the square. They reached the hearts of the Bhilai people, responding to their thoughts and hopes.

"Large-scale industrial enterprises are tangible sprouts of the economic progress of your country, which has rid itself of colonial dependence," Khrushchov continued. "However, a hard struggle has still to be fought before the painful heritage of the colonial past can be eliminated and a better life ensured. The winning of freedom by the peoples of the former colonies and semi-colonies is only the first step to genuine independence. In order to win full independence it is necessary to have a highly developed national economy.

"Now the successful development of the economy of any country is possible only through industrialisation. We know this very well by our own experience....

"Soviet people understand and sympathise with India's desire to develop her industry. We wish you every success in this arduous but glorious path."

Khrushchov's words were drowned in a storm of applause and shouts of "Khrushchov, *zinda bād!*", "Long live Khrushchov!" and "*Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!*"

The people of Bhilai saw Khrushchov off as he drove from the meeting in an open car. Thousands lined the street, hands raised over their heads.

Those were toil-hardened hands, applauding, stretching notebooks and albums to be autographed, folded in the traditional *namaste*, rising like doves to wave a greeting, symbolising the unity and might of the working people in the struggle for peace and a better future.

Western correspondents have often speculated about the "secret" that made Khrushchov dear and understandable to all the people on our planet. And the simplest and most

exhaustive answer seems to have come from an Indian journal, which wrote:

"He invariably sets out on his journeys to foreign countries with an open heart and with good intentions. This is the essence of his diplomacy, the diplomacy of peace and truth, the diplomacy of friendship and creative co-operation of the people."

An open heart and good intentions! Those qualities of the head of the Soviet Government were clearly evident during the friendly talk Khrushchov had with the engineers, technicians and office workers of the Bhilai Works for several hours after the meeting.

Minister Manubhai Shah observed that during the talk Khrushchov spoke like an expert in matters of science and technology, showing a thorough knowledge of the problems of metallurgy.

The head of the Soviet Government did not confine himself to praise alone when he spoke about Bhilai's achievements. He made a number of important critical remarks, valuable suggestions, and promised Soviet help in eliminating the shortcomings and introducing technical novelties.

"I have the very best of impressions about this works," Khrushchov said. "You may say that we drew up the project in the Soviet Union, provide the consultation for the project and yet praise ourselves the way a father praises his son. When a firm praises its own equipment with an eye to selling it, that is one thing, but when the equipment is already working and is working badly, then you have to hold your tongue. If equipment does not work, no amount of praise can make it any better. As you can see for yourselves, our equipment works well and that speaks for itself. I can tell you frankly that we should have been proud to have a works like this in our country. It is a good works fitted with the most up-to-date equipment with due regard to the latest achievements of science and engineering in the sphere of metallurgy.

"In your country iron and steel mills are also being built



by the British and the Germans. That enables you to compare and see how modern this equipment really is. In any case, as I have been told, they began building earlier, while you and we started the construction of the Bhilai Works later. But this works is producing several times more metal than the mills whose construction was started earlier."

Khrushchov made note that the Bhilai Works had few reinforced-concrete structures. He observed that they had come into extensive use in the Soviet Union and stressed that the future belonged to reinforced concrete, which was cheap, rational and enduring.

The experience of both the Soviet Union and India bore out his words. During his first visit to India in 1955, Khrushchov visited the railway car works in Madras. The assistant of the plant's senior mechanic, S. D. Devara, remembers the occasion to this day. He told one of the authors:

"When Mr. Khrushchov visited our works he made a big impression on us, especially with his thorough technical knowledge. Among other things, Mr. Khrushchov criticised us for building most of the shops of steel structures, while India did not have too much metal. Reinforced concrete, he stressed, would have yielded a considerable saving of steel. At the time we tried to justify our attitude. But developments have borne out Mr. Khrushchov's criticism—especially when we faced the task of extending the works. Now we are building all the important structures of reinforced concrete. Mr. Khrushchov's advice is especially convincing when you come to think of the staggering Soviet scientific and technical progress, one of the tokens of which is the launching of sputniks, luniks and new powerful space rockets."

Khrushchov made a few suggestions concerning the housing in Bhilai. He advised building four- or five-storey houses with due regard to the climate, rather than small one- and two-storey houses.

"If you like," he said, "we can design a model settlement for you. We could select experienced designers, engineers and architects for the job. They would draw up the design and you would see it and decide. If it suited you, you would accept it and if it didn't, you would reject it."

"That is a very good idea," said Manubhai Shah, "we welcome it."

The Indian specialists and managers asked Khrushchov many technical questions, and he furnished concise and exhaustive replies.

\* \* \*

Bhilai is on everybody's lips in India.

The Indian weekly, *Panchshil Herald*, printed an article by Major General Sahib Singh Sokhey, a prominent public leader and member of the Bureau of the World Peace Council. He wrote that the Bhilai Steel Works was a living example of the new world built with the economic co-operation of the Soviet Union. Technically it was one of the most modern steel works he had ever seen in various countries and in India proper. But it was not simply a good modern works. It had Soviet and Indian engineers and technicians, and, what was just as important, they lived together in a single colony and in similar houses. According to Sokhey, this new world founded on the principle of coexistence, of which Indians dreamt, was a world in which all peoples were equal and lived in friendship.

During Khrushchov's tour of India he was accompanied among other journalists and writers by the prominent Indian writer, K. A. Abbas. A month before Khrushchov's visit to India Abbas had visited Moscow, where he was received by the head of the Soviet Government. When he returned home he was literally swamped with requests to speak about his impressions, his meetings with Soviet people, and about Khrushchov, who is immensely popular with the people of India.



"He seems to represent and personalise the mood, the hopes and aspirations of his people," Abbas wrote, "a mood of confidence induced by the success of the Soviet sputniks and rockets, the knowledge that a better life for them is within sight and in many material respects already within their grasp, and the hope that Khrushchov's ceaseless strivings for peace are now assured of ultimate success."

Inspired by all he had seen, Ahmad Abbas typed all that night and produced his "Light of Bhilai", an article published in the *Pravda*.

"Bhilai," Abbas wrote, "has been visited by Prime Minister N. S. Khrushchov. He has a good reason to be interested in this town, because, as the Indian Minister, Manubhai Shah, said, he is the 'builder of Bhilai'. It was he who during his previous visit to India inspired us to build that steel works and offered India not only the credits necessary to buy Soviet equipment, but also the services of Soviet specialists to help build the works and train Indian engineers and workers.

"Today the Bhilai Works has become a reality, a brilliant and inspiring reality. Mr. Khrushchov described it as the symbol of friendship between the Indian and Soviet peoples. That's just what it is. . . . May the lights of Bhilai burn. They are lights of friendship. May they burn forever!"

## TWO KINDS OF ASSISTANCE

We have related above how, in a friendly way, Khrushchov told the people of Bhilai at the dinner what he thought about the nature of the economic assistance rendered to India by the Soviet Union and about the "assistance" of the capitalist powers to the newly free countries. His remarks had a stormy response in the country and outside it, giving rise to heated arguments and discussions.

It was observed in India that Khrushchov had raised a very topical issue, that he had exposed the true substance of what the colonial powers called "aid" to economically underdeveloped countries. The problems of building the future India took precedence over all others in the local press. The wheels of the bourgeois propaganda machine began to grind. None were indifferent to the big issue raised by the head of the Soviet Government.

"Would you like to know how we get along with the Western Powers which possess the secret of producing atomic energy?" a young Indian nuclear researcher asked. "We have learned by our own experience what their talk about 'aid' to the newly independent peoples is worth. Let me give you an example. When our government decided to found a nuclear research centre in Trombay, the announcement literally stunned the imperialists. 'What? Develop nuclear science in a backward country?' the Western 'experts' asked with feigned surprise. But the atomic installation in Trombay was started up. Our chief, Dr. Bhabha, announced that India had begun building her first atomic power station. And again the Western 'experts' claimed that this was premature for India. 'You should first learn to mine and use coal the modern way,' they maintained. 'You must cover the whole distance travelled by Western civilisation before you can build atomic power stations.' But we replied with deeds. India's first atomic power station will go into operation in Ahmedabad in a few years."

It is quite plain from what the young Indian engineer told us that the Western monopolies are worried. They want an India with an undeveloped economy. That is their only chance to retain and extend foreign interests in that country. By the end of 1956 Western monopoly interests in India amounted to Rs5,067 million. By 1959 that figure mounted to Rs 5,930 million. They control all of the Indian oil industry, 90 per cent of the rubber and jute industries, and a substantial part of the automobile, tea and a few other industries.



For the time being, the Western monopolies say, investment in India is an attractive proposition, for it holds promise of big profits. Suffice it to say that in 1955 three hundred major American companies netted an average profit of 10 to 12 per cent in the United States, and no less than 20 per cent in India. Remittances of profits from India by foreign companies rose from Rs 262 million in 1953 to all of Rs 384 million in 1955.

In spite of this the foreign monopolies think their economic offensive on India still not active enough. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, controlled by Wall Street, for example, held an annual meeting in Delhi, and what did it discuss?

The underdeveloped countries have the "disturbing" tendency, said financier Jean Van Houtte at the meeting, "of looking too exclusively towards officially organised financial assistance. It is probably timely to emphasise the role of private capital and the importance of encouraging its movements".

The demands listed in the International Bank report were still more impudent. Its authors tendered India a kind of ultimatum. They insisted on restricting the government sector and recommended shelving a number of started projects. They criticised the Indian Government for deciding to build two oil-refining plants—one with Soviet and the other with Rumanian help. As an alternative, they suggested that India grant foreign monopolies new oil concessions and permit them to build oil refineries. The report recommended limiting investments in heavy industry and abandoning the idea of building big state-owned enterprises in that field.

But that was not all! Pressure was brought to bear on India via the diplomatic channels. U.S. Under-Secretary of State Douglas C. Dillon gave to understand in one of his official statements that U.S. "aid" to India would depend on the latter's consent to permit direct control over the use of this "aid".

The Indian public could not but view these recommendations and statements as a fresh attempt to pressure India, hold up the development of the state sector, of the national economy as a whole, and to help the foreign monopolies squeeze fresh millions out of the natural wealth and the people of India.

"These demands," the editor of the Indian bourgeois journal *Commerce and Industry*, Lanka Sundaram, wrote angrily, "meet determined resistance from the Indian Government, because they signify that aid is linked to conditions and really constitutes interference in our internal affairs."

The capitalist powers profess to be India's benefactors. Yet they continue the policy of colonial penetration into her economy. The administrators of the International Bank see to it that the means they lend India are spent on anything but industrial development. Furthermore, the loans are made against high interest rates, and cost the Indian people dearly.

Here is an example. Under the terms of one of the International Bank loans India was compelled to buy motors from Baldwin-Lima Corporation at prices double those prevailing in the world market. She had to buy American tractors, which, by the way, turned out to be unsuited for Indian conditions, on the same terms.

The main purpose of the American monopolies is to clear the road for private investment and retard the development of an Indian heavy industry. The monopolists know that in the contemporary environment, the Indian Government is the only force able to consolidate the national economy and found a heavy industry at a fast rate. This explains why they are so eager to undermine the state sector or subordinate it to their own interests.

"The experience of recent years," Khrushchov said at the Bhilai meeting, "clearly shows that there exist in the world today two different approaches to the problem of aid to economically underdeveloped countries. It is the



desire of the Soviet Union and the other socialist states that our economic and technical assistance to these countries should accelerate the development of the former colonies and semi-colonies, strengthen their national independence. But there are some in the West who use their 'aid' as an instrument of a new colonial policy, as a means of promoting the interests of monopoly capital and increasing the political division of the world into hostile groupings."

Enthusiastically applauded, Khrushchov went on to say:

"The economic and technical co-operation of the Soviet Union with the countries of Asia and Africa is founded on a sincere desire to help these countries in their offensive against backwardness, poverty, disease and illiteracy. Long before the October Revolution, Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, said that 'we shall exert every effort to form close ties and unite with the Mongolians, Persians, Indians and Egyptians,' that 'we shall endeavour to render unselfish cultural assistance to these peoples, who are more backward and more oppressed than ourselves'. The Soviet Union in its policy has undeviatingly followed these behests of Lenin. We consider it our international duty to help the nations that have thrown off the political power of the colonialists to free themselves completely from all the fetters of dependence, put an end to economic backwardness and achieve social progress and prosperity. Our economic and technical co-operation with the countries of Asia and Africa is the logical continuation of that fraternal support we have invariably and consistently given to the anti-imperialist liberation movement of the oppressed peoples."

"Evidence of this is the steadily growing economic and technical co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Republic of India which has been most fully manifested in the construction of the Bhilai Steel Works."

After Khrushchov's first visit to India and the signing of the Indian-Soviet agreement on the Bhilai project the

economic relations between the two countries expanded steadily, furthered by the Indian Government's policy of consolidating the country's economic and political independence through industrialisation and the building of large-scale enterprises of heavy industry in the state sector.

It is now generally recognised that Soviet-Indian economic co-operation is an important factor in the development of India's industry. When the agreement of September 12, 1959, placed a Soviet loan of 1,500 million rubles for technical assistance to the third five-year plan industrial projects at the disposal of the Indian Government, the *Indian Express* pointed out that Soviet assistance had become an integral factor of India's economic development.

The draft of the Indian third five-year plan was published in June 1960. It listed enterprises to be built or extended in 1961-1966 in the state sector. A large number of these enterprises, the most important of them, are to be built or extended with Soviet assistance. This applies to the extension of the Bhilai Works, whose annual capacity is to rise from 1,000,000 to 2,500,000 tons of steel—a quarter of the country's total steel output in 1966—and the extension of the engineering plant in Ranchi and the mining machinery plant in Durgapur. The latter enterprises are to form the nucleus of India's national heavy machine-building industry.

The 250,000-kw thermal power station in Neiweli is going up with Soviet assistance, and ultimately its capacity will be brought up to 400,000 kw. It is also with Soviet assistance that India will extend the 200,000-kw power station in Korba and build a new 250,000-kw station in Singhrauli. The aggregate capacity of the power stations built with Soviet technical aid will amount to 850,000 kw, or 28 per cent of India's total power-producing facilities to be built under the third five-year plan.

At present India has several foreign-owned oil refineries processing some 5,000,000 tons of crude oil a year. They



largely work on imported oil. A refinery for 2,000,000 tons of crude oil is being built with Soviet aid in Barauni, and another for 750,000 tons with Rumanian technical assistance.

Recently the Soviet Government agreed to meet an Indian Government request for new credits of 500 million rubles to augment the third five-year plan finances. That was a fresh important step towards the further development of friendly co-operation between the two countries.

When the second open-hearth furnace, the blooming and the billet mill were put into operation at the Bhilai Works, Prime Minister Nehru wrote in a telegram to Khrushchov:

"The success of this great undertaking is not only a landmark in India's industrial progress, but is also a symbol of the co-operation of Soviet and Indian specialists, which we welcome so much. We look forward with confidence to further Soviet-Indian economic and technical co-operation in the great task we have undertaken of building up a new India."

India's road to economic independence is not easy. But her patriotic forces are confident of the future. Development of the state sector, of a domestic heavy industry, co-operation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, are a guarantee of success.

"The economic assistance rendered by the Soviet Union to countries with underdeveloped economies," said S. M. Bannerji, a prominent trade union leader and member of Parliament, "is an epochal event. One should judge of this assistance not only by its size, which is in itself considerable, but also by the fact that it is given on terms which no Western country has been able to offer so far. It is extended without political strings of any kind, in a fraternal spirit of friendship and is motivated by a desire to help the countries of Asia and Africa to overcome the difficulties they face. What is more, Soviet economic assistance goes to develop those economic branches of the underdeveloped countries which enable them to strengthen

their independence and lay the foundations for industrialisation."

It may be recalled that two other steel works are being built in India besides Bhilai. One by English firms in Durgapur and another by West German firms in Rourkela. Let us look into their background.

Between 1949 and 1955 India had repeatedly approached the Western Powers for assistance. This was understandable. The young republic was experiencing great financial difficulties, and the International Bank had refused India a loan. The American and British concerns turned down the Indian request. The West German Krupp concern asked for extravagantly high interest rates and special privileges.

In the meantime, the Soviet Government, eager to render India fraternal and disinterested aid, responded to her request readily. The two countries signed the Bhilai agreement. This reinforced India's position in her negotiations with the West. The final stage of the negotiations with the German firms proceeded more rapidly and easily. The West Germans became more tractable. Krupp's undertook to build a plant in Rourkela. In 1955 a British consortium suddenly offered its services. In October 1956 an agreement was signed with it concerning a steel project in Durgapur.

Today Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur are for Indians, and for the rest of the world, an example of economic competition between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. Who will win? What standards of engineering are the countries involved going to demonstrate? These questions are on all lips.

And life furnished exhaustive answers to them.

"I talked at length with both Indians and Russians," said Averell Harriman after a visit to Bhilai before his trip to the Soviet Union. The Russians "and the Indians shared a mutual enthusiasm for 'our steel mill' that transcended differences in political ideology. Bhilai is a vivid



symbol of India's determination to industrialise as rapidly as possible. It is also a symbol of Russia's decision to participate in India's development in a spectacular way."

"In India, Bhilai," the *American Business Week* admitted, "has had a tremendous impact on public opinion—and not just on Communist sympathisers. . . . Perhaps most important, the Russians at Bhilai have managed to become an integral part of this new steel town. . . . At Rourkela and Durgapur, where the West Germans and British, respectively, are building steel mills for the Indian Government, there is not the same easy relationship—either at work or after hours."

A *U.S. News and World Report* correspondent once visited the three projects to find out why the Bhilai Works was the most popular of them among the Indian people. He compared how the works were being built and convinced himself why the Indians preferred the Bhilai project.

"On-the-job relations between Russians and Indians," he wrote, "appear to be excellent. They work side by side, with the Indians taking over as they learn their jobs. The Russians show enormous patience with the relatively unskilled Indians."

"The picture at the German-built plant presents a sharp contrast. Relations between Germans and Indians are far from good. . . . Soviet managers and engineers at Bhilai all have private offices, but next door are their Indian counterparts. At Durgapur, the British-built plant, the top Indian and British executives have offices six miles apart. At Rourkela, the West German project, the Germans and Indians are barely on speaking terms. . . .

"The Russians had a construction time-table and they stayed with it. . . . Speed of construction was impressive. The Bhilai job got under way 18 months after work started on the German plant, but the Germans 'blew in' their first blast furnace last February, only one day ahead of the first Bhilai furnace. . . .

"The Bhilai Plant is scheduled to be in full operation by the end of this year. The target date for the Germans is spring, 1961; for the British, who got a late start, it is July, 1961....

"If you ask any Indian about his country's new steel industry, the first thing he is likely to say is, 'Oh, Bhilai! Have you seen it?'...

"A visitor to all of India's new steel works—Russian, American, German and British—comes away from the Soviet project at Bhilai with this clear impression: The willingness of the Russians to teach the Indians how to build their own mill has given Moscow a marked psychological edge over the West in this phase of 'peaceful competition' between the free (that is what the journal calls the capitalist countries.—*Authors*) and Communist worlds."

The slow progress in Rourkela is a source of concern not only to the Indian public, but to politicians and businessmen in West Germany. The influential West German *Spiegel* revealed deplorable facts, garnishing them with highly expressive comments.

"Rourkela," it wrote, "is well on its way to becoming the Indian tombstone for German industrialists... a tragedy in steel and iron."

The *Spiegel* gives a colourful account of the Rourkela tragedy. The plant is operating at half of its capacity; tens of thousands of steel billets are piled high in the stockyard because they cannot be turned into ready products on account of the necessary shops not being completed; of the 20 iron ladles at the works only four or five are in working order; the first converter had to be stopped after 53 smeltings, and the second after 44; to avoid stopping production before the completion of the cold broad-band rolling mill the Indians went to the length of sending the billets 400 kilometres by rail to Calcutta and then shipping them 15,000 kilometres to be rolled into broad-banded iron in Germany and then shipped back to India to be sold.



The *Spiegel* notes the difference in the terms of West German and Soviet credits. For Rourkela (total cost Rs 1,700 million) the West German banks furnished a credit of Rs 750 million until 1964 at 6.5 per cent interest. The Soviet Union granted a credit of Rs 600 million over a period of twelve years at only 2.5 per cent interest for the Bhilai Works (total cost Rs 1,300 million).

The *Spiegel* quotes Shri M. Ganapati, the Indian Manager of the Rourkela project, as saying that the German firms had made him "an object of ridicule to the public". "They have let me down," he said. "They have broken my heart. . . . Rourkela can scarcely report any production figures, while the Russians can do so for Bhilai. . . . The Russians are possibly making too much propaganda for their Bhilai Works, but what harm does that do? They produce twice as much as Rourkela. Here (in India) it is the production figures that count."

The production figures of the Bhilai Works are not bad. This is quite true. On the eve of the 13th anniversary of Indian independence, August 14, 1960, we telephoned Shrivastava, the General Manager of the Bhilai Works. He told us the plant "had made outstanding progress".

"By now," he said, "we have produced 700,000 tons of iron and about 160,000 tons of steel."

Bhilai iron is now exported to Japan, Pakistan and, of all places, Britain. The British ex-colony exports iron to Britain! Isn't that a fact which should make those who dream of a return to the past sit up and take notice?

The *Spiegel* does not confine its account to the technical failures in Rourkela. It tells about the moral turpitude of the West German specialists, about the disreputable treatment of Indian women by some of the "specialists". The German construction site, writes the journal, has become a "factory of bastards", a place of "utterly shameless prostitution".

The journal cites numerous incidents to illustrate the treatment of Indian personnel by the West German special-

ists. Here is one. A Siemens AG assemblyman missed a sum of money. His Indian bearer happened to be away. The German and his friends caught the bearer's brother in another German home and required a confession from him. When the man declared that he had no knowledge of the missing money "they insisted on wresting a confession from him. Hot irons were applied to naked parts of his body". The ugly fascist mould of some of the West German "specialists" was thus bared to the public.

The Indian press also reacted to the deplorable state of affairs in Durgapur, where a steel works is being built by the British. There was trouble there with the erection of bridge piles, jeopardising the pivotal structure of the works. The situation was serious enough for Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to make public mention of it. A special Parliament committee was set up to investigate the state of affairs in Durgapur. And the people could not naturally avoid comparing the projects handled by representatives of the West German and British monopolies, on the one hand, and the Bhilai project, handled by Soviet specialists, on the other.

"The Indian public," Nikhil Chakravarti, director of the India Press news agency, told us, "were greatly impressed by the behaviour of the Soviet engineers vis-à-vis their Indian colleagues—technicians and engineers. The public did not fail to see the difference between the situation in Rourkela and Durgapur, on the one hand, and Bhilai, on the other. There have been complaints in Durgapur about the bad treatment accorded to Indians by the British. Things came to a pass where one of the leading British representatives, a former army officer, was compelled to resign. The Indian engineers have complained that the British show no desire to train Indians or even showing them how to do their jobs. The British in Durgapur keep away from Indians in their everyday life. On many occasions they have mistreated their Indian colleagues."

"At Bhilai," Chakravarti concluded, "Soviet engineers



and their families mix freely with their Indian colleagues. The word 'white' has been a synonym of hate and contempt among the ordinary Indians ever since the British ruled the country. Today in Bhilai the 'white' who has come to India from a socialist country is a man whose devotion and innate goodwill have won the hearts of all he meets in new India."

The Soviet specialists in India are, indeed, people of the new, socialist mould, educated by the Communist Party in a spirit of profound respect for other nations; they are people who want to do everything they can to help their Indian friends in the development of their national economy.

Bhilai was recently visited by a correspondent of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a Calcutta daily. He spent a fairly long time at the steel works mixing with Soviet specialists, and ultimately published an article on Bhilai in his paper. Here is what he wrote:

"Five American labour representatives now touring in India were having a good look at the plants. At Blast Furnace No. 1 one of them watching at the golden gushing glow of molten iron said to me, 'When we see a project like this we get nervous that Russians are getting ahead of us.' I had a deep look at the American and said, 'Really?' All the five Americans individually said things to the effect, 'Yes, this Steel Mill is indeed something of which any nation could be proud....'

"One afternoon at a lunch I asked General Manager, Mr. N. C. Shrivastava, 'Tell me please what do the Russians think of our technicians and workers.'

"He smiled and said, 'Ask the Russians'.... The Russian Chief Engineer, Mr. N. V. Goldin was not far away at the table. He shook my hands vigorously and said smiling, 'The time is not far off when Indian engineers will go abroad to build similar plants for other nations.' I have not heard of such tributes paid to our engineers now working at Durgapur and Rourkela....

" 'Here everything is an open book' said another. 'Russians don't pass a single job unless they are absolutely satisfied,' someone volunteered to say while another said, 'Even the Russian Chief Engineer would sit with our humblest workers to explain things'....

"Indo-Soviet collaboration at Bhilai is absolutely without any kind of reservation and it is complete....

"What I find in Bhilai is that Russians have no complex. They have no officer mentality, no snobbery either. Any Indian co-worker could walk into any Russian office and the first thing the Russian does is to shake the visitor's hand, offer him a seat and then ask business.

"I have visited some Russians in their homes.

"No Russian has a servant or helper here. Every Russian does his or her own domestic work. Every morning I see from the window of my room Russian housewives with baskets in hand going to the bazar for their daily shopping.

"The Russians cook their own food, scrub their own floors, wash their own clothes.

"The Russians mix with the Indians most freely.

"That is the most impressive sight in the Bhilai township and the bazar today...."

The writer ended his article with this final remark:

"Bhilai is a dream that has come true."

It is readily seen why Khrushchov's visit to Bhilai turned into so striking a demonstration of Indian-Soviet friendship, why he was given so enthusiastic a welcome.

Khrushchov was applauded not only by the people of Bhilai. The warmth of his meetings spread across the length and breadth of India—to the seaboard of Malabar and Coromandel, the foothills of the Himalayas and to the Ganges valley.

Khrushchov was still talking with the Bhilai specialists, after which he was supposed to board a plane at once for Calcutta, when a crowd gathered outside his hotel. All had turned out, big and small, Indian and Soviet children, their



parents, silver-haired old men from the neighbouring villages. Everybody wanted to wish him fair weather in his mission of friendship and peace in Asia.

But it was not only at the hotel that people had gathered to see him off. They formed a living corridor nearly all along the 30-kilometre drive from Bhilainagar to the Raipur airfield.

There were flowers again, and garlands, and the national flags of the Soviet Union and India, and streamers. And all the way to Raipur there were the unfailing shouts of "Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!" and "Khrushchov zinda bād!"

Somewhere along the route between Bhilai and Raipur, in a small village, we heard the inspired words of the Indian anthem, *Jana-Gana-Mana*, the Morning Song of India, sung by medical college students in honour of the head of the Soviet Government.

*The night dawns, the sun rises in the East,  
The birds sing, the morning breeze brings a stir of  
new life.  
Touched by the golden rays of thy love  
India wakes up. . . .*

## CALCUTTA PAST AND PRESENT

### MONUMENTS DIFFER

Nights in the south fall quickly, as though they are chased in. No sooner does a smokily, foggily dusk fall than the day goes out altogether. Millions of lights are switched on, and the countless stars twinkle much like their reflections in the bottomless pit of black sky.

It was late evening when the plane carrying Khrushchov from Raipur landed at Dum-Dum, the Calcutta airport.

The distinguished visitor was met by Miss P. Naidu, Governor of the State of West Bengal, B. C. Roy, Chief Minister, Humayun Kabir, Union Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Ministers of the Government of West Bengal, foreign consuls, workers of Soviet offices in Calcutta, and numerous correspondents.

Khrushchov met the Chief Minister like an old acquaintance, for they had met on his previous visit to Calcutta. Khrushchov invited Mr. Roy to visit Moscow.

"Come and see the snow in Russia."

"I've seen snow in America and Europe," the Chief Minister replied, laughing.

"That was capitalist snow," Khrushchov jested.

"So it was."



The official ceremony was not over yet, spotlights burning bright, photographers' bulbs flashing, children presenting Khrushchov bouquets of flowers, but somewhere near, like a rising tide, thousands of voices scanned:

*"Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!"*

Accompanied by West Bengal leaders, Khrushchov drove out of the airport in an open car, and the traditional motto of Indian-Soviet friendship rang out from end to end.

*Shonar Bangla*, Golden Bengal—as poets and writers have been calling it—turned out in full force to greet its welcome guest, an old friend.

When Khrushchov first visited Calcutta, the West Bengal capital had given him a welcome it had never given anyone before. Three million people—townsmen and peasants from the surrounding villages—turned out, transforming the streets into a veritable ocean of heads. It was a welcome that all India will always remember. Now again Calcutta opened its big heart to Nikita Khrushchov.

The airport was fifteen kilometres out of the city, and all along the route thousands upon thousands of ordinary people came out to see and welcome the goodwill envoy of the Soviet Union.

"Welcome!" This heart-felt word was written in Bengali on red, white and blue streamers. "Greetings to Khrushchov!" and "Khrushchov—Outstanding Champion of Peace!" was written in Russian.

Calcutta applauded the Soviet visitor enthusiastically. And Khrushchov, standing in the open car, greeted the people of Calcutta, his old friends, with all his heart. On both sides of the vehicle stood solid walls of people.

"*Namaskar! Namaskar!*" people shouted the Bengali greeting from balconies and terraces, from the windows of tall buildings, and from the roofs, where thousands clustered. People sat on tree branches, on advertising pillars, on wrought-iron fences. They clung miraculously to projections on the walls of buildings, and there was the impression at times that no houses existed at all, but huge

human pyramids. Next day the *Mail of Madras* reported the "enthusiastic welcome" accorded to Khrushchov. "Women and children," it wrote, "occupying all vantage positions on balconies and house terraces kept waiting for hours to have a look of the Soviet Prime Minister."

We heard exclamations in Russian:

"Zdravstvuite!"

"Privet, Nikita!"

"Mir, druzhba!"

The Soviet visitor arrived in Raj Bhavan, the Calcutta palace that once was the citadel of the British rulers of India and is now the residence of the Governor of West Bengal. Next day, after a short rest, Khrushchov was due to embark on his trip to other countries. But Calcutta wanted to see its old friend once more, and an understanding was reached that Khrushchov would spend a day in that city on his way back. Calcutta looked forward to it.

Calcutta is one of the biggest cities in India. Its population is estimated at close on seven million. Its appearance is a constant reminder of the horrors of colonial rule, which the people of India had cast off but recently. It stuns the visitor with its sharp contrasts.

The vast square in the heart of the city, the Maidan, creates the illusion of a spacious city. But once you turn into the sidestreets you see that it is very narrow brooks that flow into that spacious lake. And the farther you get from downtown, the narrower the streets—almost impassable at some points. The tall buildings in the narrow streets offer a life-saving shade. But the air stagnates in these labyrinths of stone. In the evenings, when thousands of people leave their homes to cook their meals on small fires out in the open, an acrid smoke covers the scene, blended with the pungent smells of spice. You get the impression that Calcutta is on fire.

Then there are the luxury palaces, the hotels, the huge



cinemas, restaurants and dance-halls, and next to them the multi-storey stone slums that you fear to approach. The latest American limousines mingle with rickshaws, often seating whole families, which the pullers propel at a steady jog. Clumsy double-decker buses, and holy cows walking carelessly amidst the pedestrians and automobiles. The famous New Market of Calcutta, where you can buy fruit from Iran and California, textiles from Lancashire and Osaka, Virginia tobacco and tobacco from Cuba, tinned fruit from America and perfumes from France—all you may wish, from a needle to a live tiger. And then, in other quarters, most appalling poverty, totally undisguised. Mothers begging for alms, and leprous cripples seated on the pavement.

And what about the Calcutta port, the biggest in India, where thousands of sweaty, sun-blackened, smudged men carry fabulous riches on their shoulders to earn a few rupees for a meal? What about the jute factories, where teen-agers wither away in a murderous dust, and the textile factories that have claimed so many human lives? No, Calcutta is indescribable. You have got to see it, to breathe its air, in order to understand the clot of human suffering that it represents, and the will and determination of the people who populate it. However difficult their living conditions had been, they had had the strength to overthrow the rule of the colonialists.

They are still having it hard, very hard. The aftermaths of colonial oppression are still in evidence. What is more, the colonialists still hold the most important levers of control. A large section of the country's economy is still in their hands. But the workers of Calcutta are not losing faith in a better future. They carry on the struggle for full liberation from oppression, be it economic, political or spiritual.

At the time of British rule, Calcutta embodied all the ulcers of capitalism multiplied by the crimes of the colonialists. Calcutta is the mirror of India's tragedy.

We have by now shown you many aspects of Indian life. But to furnish a more comprehensive picture of modern India, we ought to recall a few historical facts. They will help us picture the path which this long-suffering country has travelled. And this is done best of all here, in Calcutta.

Mysterious, fabulously wealthy India had long enticed the European colonialists. As far back as the 16th century, the Portuguese came there. They were followed by the Dutch, the French, and the British. In the 17th century the British East India Company started in on its piratical programme. Three hundred years ago, on the bank of the Hugli, a tributary of the great Ganges, there arose the first small British trading station. It is an old adage that if you give the colonialist a finger, he'll bite off the hand. The factor, Job Charnock, a merchant and adventurer, made the most of the feudal strife reigning in Bengal to receive a firman from the Emperor in Delhi, authorising him to trade with India. In 1690 he landed in the village of Sutanati on the bank of the Hugli.

In fever-ridden marshy jungle Charnock rented land and founded a British settlement that was to become the stronghold of British commerce. Such was the origin of Calcutta. It is believed (though historians have not finished arguing about it) that Calcutta derives its name from Kalikata, one of the three villages on the Hugli.

The big-time colonial pirates, who drove back the tigers and petty robbers, were poised for the decisive blow. They built Fort William, whose glowering walls still overshadow the Calcutta Maidan—a mute symbol of Bengal's tragedy.

Exactly a hundred years after the founding of the first trading station on the Hugli, the British colonialists headed by Robert Clive, an adventurer, started a declared war against India. They crushed the army of the Bengal ruler in the battle at Plassey and became masters of Bengal in 1757.

The shameless and barbarous sack of Bengal by the East



India Company and the British authorities is one of the most disgraceful chapters in the story of Britain's rule over India—one of the most tragic chapters in the history not only of India, but of all mankind.

Ponder on the facts and figures we have taken from British sources. Here they are:

In 1764/65, the last year of the rule of the last Indian nawab of Bengal, the land tax he collected added up to £817,000. In the very first year of East India Company government, 1765/66, the same tax added up to £1,470,000. And ten years later it climbed to £2,818,000!

Robert Clive prospered fabulously. He returned to England with £300,000, an immense fortune for his time, and was created baron and elected to Parliament. But he could not wait to return to India, this time as Governor. The prospect of further plunder enticed him. His goings-on in India were so scandalous, however, that the British Parliament finally accused him of "lack of restraint". Responding to the charge, the highly-placed pirate declared with his usual cynicism:

"Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey had placed me. A great prince was dependent on my pleasure. An opulent city, more opulent and populous than London, lay at my mercy, its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles. I walked through vaults thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels.... At this moment I stand astounded at my own moderation."

Robert Clive ended badly. He was an opium addict and took his own life in a fit of despair. A monument was erected for the robber baron in the City of London, and statues of him still stand in India. It is only natural that Clive had successors. Among them was Lord Cornwallis, the same who surrendered to General George Washington after a hopeless endeavour to retain the British colonies in America. He was appointed Governor-General of India and established a permanent land tax system in 1793.

under which the revenue was arbitrarily fixed at £3,400,000. His contemporaries testify that the system led to a rapid exhaustion of the country's resources and decimated the population through constant undernourishment, turning a third of the land into jungle populated by wild beasts.

The colonial regime was one of the main causes of the frightful famine in Bengal in 1770. It is estimated that some ten million died of starvation that year. But their death did not in the least ruffle the East India Company and the British administration. The Council of the East India Company reported from Calcutta in 1771:

"Notwithstanding the great severity of the late famine and the great reduction of people thereby, some increase has been made in the settlements both of the Bengal and the Bihar provinces for the present year."

William Fullarton, a member of Parliament, speaking about the state of India twenty years after the British invasion, wrote:

"In former times the Bengal countries were the granary of nations, and the repository of commerce, wealth and manufacture in the East.... But such has been the restless energy of our misgovernment that within the short space of twenty years many parts of these countries have been reduced to the appearance of a desert. The fields are no longer cultivated; extensive tracts are already overgrown with thickets; the husbandman is plundered; the manufacturer oppressed; famine has been repeatedly endured; and depopulation has ensued."

The apologists of British colonialism admit that the early years of India's conquest had indeed been years of plunder, but that they were followed by a "process of improvements and reforms". The Labourite "theorist" and Defence Minister of the Labour Government (a striking blend of theory and practice, isn't it?), John Strachey, who published a book titled *The End of Empire*, believes Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of Bengal, to



have been the pioneer in that field. Strachey describes him as "loving India, conquering India, enriching India, despoiling India". Under his governor-generalship, Strachey writes, "a constructive and beneficial, as well as a plundering and devastating, side to British rule became apparent".

Today, more than at any other time, the apologists of colonialism try to construe Hasting's "progressive" role in the hope of prolonging the days of the tottering colonial system. Yet it is quite clear that colonialism, that is, armed conquest and enslavement of other lands, plunder of their wealth, their economic subjugation to the metropolitan country, and the sacrifice of millions of lives, never has been and never could have been progressive.

Here are a few more figures. They pull to pieces the notion that there had ever been a "constructive and beneficial" side to British colonialism.

Between 1849 and 1914 raw cotton shipments from India increased 13 times over in value. In the case of jute they increased more than 126 times over, and of grain (chiefly rice and wheat, the staples) more than 22 times over. In the same period (between 1851 and 1900, to be exact), India suffered 24 famines. Even the obviously minimised official figures place the toll these famines took in human lives at 20,000,000.

The rape of India was the chief source of capital accumulation for the British. That was where the millions in the cellars of the City of London come from. The word "loot" entered the English language from Bengali at the time of the plunder of Bengal. The wealth seized in India made up the bulk of investments in British industry, which availed itself of technical inventions new at the time. It contributed to the growth of the British Empire.

India was made a source of raw materials for British industry, a market for British goods, a sphere for British investments. Everything Britain built on Indian soil—be it railways, mines, factories or ports—was built at the

expense of the Indian people for the benefit of the British monopolies. This was true not only of India.

As you walk the streets of the City of London this very day, past the old, sombre, begrimed buildings with their polished copper signboards of banks and trading firms, it seems that not the age-old grime of the city of business alone, but the blood of millions of Indians, Burmese, Malays, Egyptians and Africans done in by the monopolies for the sake of profit, would stay on your finger if you touched their walls. It is a touch of irony that the Bank of England, whose gray mass towers in one of the main City thoroughfares, was built on the site of an old cemetery. It thrives—literally and figuratively—on human bones.

Lord Curzon once said that "India is the pivot of our Empire.... If the Empire loses any other part of its Dominion we can survive, but if we lose India the sun of our Empire will have set."

Ernest Jones, a British poet and publicist who had contacts with Marx and Engels, spoke about the British Empire in a somewhat different vein. "On its colonies," he said, "the sun never sets, but the blood never dries."

Some of the apologists of colonialism concur. Yes, they say, this was true of the 19th century, but there was a great change in the 20th. "Kind-hearted" colonialists appeared, who took an interest in the lot of the peoples of India and their other possessions.

There have indeed been different colonialists. They could no longer act as crudely in the 20th century as Clive had done. The exploitation of colonies was substantially improved, the plunder disguised. While squeezing India dry as before, the British authorities gave it a handout now and then in the shape of a new school or hospital, and did so with much pomp, impressing the gullible that the oppressors had indeed grown kinder. The immense propaganda machine of the monopolies—the press, the radio, and the church—was concentrated on advertising the "benevolence" of the metropolitan country.



The shrewd colonialists did not neglect to create a stratum of local people in some of the dependent countries, who owed their standing to the colonial regime and were loyal to it. These men were the spiritual slaves of the colonialists, and that is the most horrible form of slavery. Needless to say, it was largely the feudals, the landlords who hated and feared the masses, that became obedient tools in the hands of foreigners. In combating the people they sided almost invariably with the colonialists. It was easiest to "divide and rule" with their help.

But no matter what guise the colonialists adopted, the substance of colonialism was, and is, the same. The more rabid section of the colonialists did not even bother to conceal its true aims. Britain's former Home Minister, Conservative W. Joynson-Hicks, for example, wanted no truck with people who claimed that the 20th-century colonialists had turned over a new leaf. He revolted against the talk of imperialism's "civilising" mission. He said bluntly that what missionaries preached at their meetings that Britain had conquered India to improve the Hindu's living standard was nonsense. Britain conquered India as a market for her goods; she conquered India with the sword, and would retain her with the sword. He did not regard himself a hypocrite enough to say that Britain help India for the sake of the Hindus.

The colonialists ruined and humiliated India and other countries equally in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The wealthier the Western countries became, the poorer grew the oppressed nations. The invaders plundered the Eastern countries and erected monuments there of the chief plunderers. They stand—the massive British forts in Calcutta and Madras, and the countless stone, bronze and marble statues of merchant adventurers, the pitiless generals, the hangman governors—in the squares and crossings of small towns and big from Karachi to Singapore.

If all this dead stone and metal were shipped to London, there would be no room left in its streets for the living.

But the Eastern peoples are finding good use for them on the spot—the stone for the pavements and the metal for machines.

The crimes committed by the colonialists have caused the people of India incalculable evil. But they have induced an undying anger against colonial oppression. And Calcutta has always stood in the van of the struggle for liberation. No wonder an Indian proverb says that what Bengal thinks today all India will think tomorrow.

Some Western writers of books fat and thin often try to oppose the struggle for liberation of the Indian people to the struggle of the other Asian and African peoples. They seek to demonstrate the “special” nature of the Indian people, which is allegedly passive. They refer to Gandhism and claim that the Indian people tolerated colonialism and was even “grateful” to it for its “civilising mission”.

Poppycock! These wretched constructions are worlds away from the facts.

It is absurd to say that some people are inclined to violence and others are not. It is self-evident that no nation ever sought—and could ever have sought—violence and war, because they go against the basic interests of the people, which ploughs and sows, and builds and loves, and raises children. The people lives and the very idea of destruction and death is repulsive to it. Yet sooner or later every people resists violence, be it the violence of a feudal lord, a capitalist, a colonialist, or an aggressor. Gandhi, whose theory of “non-violence” is all but regarded as a new Indian religion, said:

“I do believe that when there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.”

The people of India responded to the violence and plunder of the colonialists with a determined struggle.

Soon after the British invaded Bengal there were uprisings of sepoys, the Indian soldiers of the British army. One of the Bengal regiments refused to enter Burma, and the British shot every tenth soldier. But the atrocities



caused a fresh storm of protest and new uprisings. Lord Canning, the newly-appointed Governor-General of India, said when leaving for his post in 1856 that "in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, no larger than a man's hand, but which growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin".

His premonition was right. A year later a powerful sepoy uprising, supported by the people, broke out. It involved many regions of the country. A hundred years after the battle at Plassey the Indian people's fight for liberation—a bitter and sanguinary, but just fight—was at its height.

It took all of ninety years for that fight to culminate in victory. And in that fight, as before, Calcutta played a prominent role. For several decades Calcutta was the capital of India. But the political climate in the city pleased the British authorities less and less. They finally removed the capital to Delhi, hoping that its climate would be quieter. Yet Calcutta remained one of the main hubs of the country's socio-political life.

Calcutta was where the Indian National Congress and its leaders took strength. Its revolutionary proletariat, which responded readily to all the developments in the country, grew and steeled itself in struggles for its rights. The proletarians of Calcutta have contributed many fine chapters to the history of the liberation struggle. The city's working class has always been a powerful support for the Communist Party of India, which fought consistently for the country's liberation from foreign domination and for the fraternal solidarity of toiling Hindus and Moslems, for India's unity and for peace.

Calcutta was where famous poets, artists, actors and writers—the guardians and successors of the fine traditions of Indian culture—lived and worked. Most prominent among them was the great Rabindranath Tagore, the most eminent writer of the epoch of Bengal's rebirth.

In the autumn of 1930, Tagore, old and sick, came to

Moscow. His doctors had thought the distant voyage a foolhardy undertaking. But Tagore would not be dissuaded. "I would have thought the purpose of my life not fully achieved if I had not come here," he wrote in a letter from the Soviet capital.

Those were difficult times for the Soviet Union. While battling against the hardships caused by many years of war, ruin and blockade, the Soviet people tackled the giant targets of the five-year plans. Tagore was amazed and delighted by the creative effort of the Soviet people. His *Letters About Russia*, which were banned by the colonial authorities in India, contain moving passages written in Moscow.

"I am delighted by the magic of European science, which can do miracles, but I am still more amazed by the immense undertaking that I witness here," he wrote.

"If they did nothing but destroy," he went on, "I should not have been surprised, because they have enough ability to destroy, but I see that they work hard to erect a new world on this vast expanse of land. They have to make haste, because the whole world is inimical, because everybody is against them. What they need is to get on their feet as quickly as possible. They have to prove at their every step that what they wish to do is not an error, not deception; they are determined to traverse a thousand years in ten or fifteen.

"In our day the slogans of the Russian Revolution have become the slogans of the whole world. Today there is only one people on earth which thinks of the interests of all people, and not only of the interests of their own nation."

In his *Letters About Russia* Tagore, the great thinker and patriot, dwelt again and again upon the lot of his own long-suffering country. He called for struggle and branded those who feared trials and were ready to retreat.

"The country will not gain freedom," Tagore wrote, "until it casts off the trammels that bind it hand and foot



by sheer force. Each jerk causes the veins to stand out on the forehead, but there is no other way to achieve liberation. British rule tears all restraining bonds with its own hands, and this causes us considerable suffering, but it loses considerably from it as well. The main thing is that it has lost prestige. We fear the unruliness of the strong, but that fear contains an element of respect. However, we hate the unruliness of a coward. Today British rule is damned by our hatred. We draw strength from that hatred, and it is by the force of that hatred that we shall win.

"I have just come back from Russia, where I saw how difficult it is for a country to win glory. Compared with the insufferable hardships that have fallen to the lot of its loyal sons, police beatings are a shower of flowers. Tell our sons: everything lies ahead, nothing will pass. If they shout 'sore!' before they engage in battle, may they bend their knees in obedience."

The liberation struggle of the Indian people was crowned with victory. London created the myth that the colonialists had withdrawn from India voluntarily, presenting her independence "on a silver platter". An absurd myth it was. The colonialists had no other choice but to withdraw from India. If they had tried to stay there longer, they would have been thrown out.

But was it a coincidence that shortly before their departure from India, just as in the early years of their rule in Bengal, there was a tragic famine? Indians will never forget the terrible year of 1943 when the calamity broke loose with the connivance of the British authorities, claiming three and a half million lives. The streets of Calcutta and the roads leading to the city were piled high with corpses.

Here is an eyewitness account:

"The endless view of plains, crops and small stations, turned almost suddenly into one long trail of starving people. Men, women, children, babies, looked up into the passing carriage, in their last hope for food. These people

were not just hungry—this was *famine*. When we stopped, children swarmed round the carriage windows, repeating hopelessly, ‘*Bakshish, sahib*’—with the monotony of a damaged gramophone.... I saw women—almost fleshless skeletons, their clothes gray with dust from wandering, with expressionless faces, not *walking*, but foot steadying foot, as though not knowing where they went. As we pulled towards Calcutta, for miles, little children naked, with inflated bellies stuck on stick-like legs, held up empty tins towards us.”

Who, you will ask, wrote these stupefying lines?

It was an Englishman by name of Clive Branson, born in India and christened after Robert Clive.

Clive Branson grew up in Britain. He was an artist and made common cause with the labour movement. He fought in Spain with the British Battalion of the International Brigade. When the Second World War broke out he became a soldier of the British army and came to India, the country of his birth.

The British soldier wrote letters to his wife. No, they were worlds apart from the despatches of the East India Company. They were emotional messages imbued with deep sympathy for the great Indian people. Their author shared its thoughts and aspirations. The letters grew into a book which the British authorities banned, but which British soldiers read to rags.

Clive Branson was sent into the frontlines. In February 1944 he lost his life in Burma.

Unlike Robert Clive, Clive Branson had no monument erected for him in the City of London, nor in India. But the memory of Clive Branson is alive among the Indian people. The soldier's Indian friends wrote:

“Our sense of personal loss is further deepened by the feeling that our people in particular is poorer for the death of Clive Branson. We shall remember with sad gratitude that he was one of the first to die in the defence of our



country and die for our cause, the cause of the Indian people and the people of Britain and the world."

There are different Clives, and different monuments.

And when some London journalists say with pursed lips and feigned injury that writing about the crimes of the British colonialists in Asia and Africa is very nearly the same as insulting the British people, we reply to them: "No, gentlemen, we are well aware of the difference between Robert Clive and Clive Branson, the difference between the Britain of Cornwallis, Hastings, Curzon and Hicks, and the Britain of Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray, and Pollitt, the difference between the British colonialists and the British people."

The colonialists withdrew from India, just as they were compelled to withdraw from other Asian countries and just as they are now withdrawing from African countries, because there is no room for colonialism in a world illuminated by the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The system of colonial slavery is crumbling.

Today Calcutta lives a new life, in spite of the grievous burden of its past.

We are in the streets of the West Bengal capital, which awaits Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov. A fortnight has gone by, and he is on his way back from Indonesia. Khrushchov promised Nehru that he would stop over in Calcutta a second time on his trip home, and its streets are once again festively clad. A light breeze tugs at the streamers stretched across the busy thoroughfares. They say: "Welcome, Khrushchov!", "Long Live World Peace!", and "Long Live Indian-Soviet Friendship!"

Chowringhee, Calcutta's main street, is always crowded. But these days the crowd is especially big beside the photo-display devoted to the Soviet Union, its Seven-Year Plan and its cultural achievements. People mill round it, view the photographs, converse and argue.

"It is a good sign that Nikita Khrushchov will come to us again," says Shah, an actor from Kashmir.

"A fortnight ago," Manik Chakravarti, a graduate of the Technological College, said to a fellow-student, "Premier Khrushchov came to us from Moscow as an envoy of peace and goodwill from the Soviet people. Now he is coming from Indonesia, the birthplace of the 'spirit of Bandung'—all Asia is behind him."

Renu Roy, a girl physician, joined the conversation.

"Don't you find that the Seven-Year Plan is an economic rocket in the peaceful competition between Russia and the United States, and a far more powerful one than the military rockets? It is the economic rocket that will determine the outcome of the competition in Russia's favour."

"When I looked at this photograph," electrician Sen said, pointing to an illustrated journal, "I thought it was a picture of Bhilai. But it turned out to be a Soviet steel works. Exactly like Bhilai! It takes true friends to share modern plants in this fraternal spirit."

The selfless generosity of the Soviet Union is spoken of in Howrah, an industrial suburb of Calcutta that has become a town in its own right. An industrial exhibition closed there a few days before. The display featured the industrial achievements of West Bengal and the town of Howrah, the site of more than 2,000 different factories and industrial enterprises.

In 1955 Khrushchov visited one of the local jute factories. During the Second World War the factory made jute fabrics for the Soviet Union, used in the manufacture of soldiers' tents. Khrushchov was presented a silver model of a tent, and the factory manager asked whether it looked like the tents in Stalingrad (now Volgograd). Khrushchov replied:

"It looks exactly the same. I was a member of the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front and remember those tents."

The Howrah textile workers recalled the episode every



time they visited the exhibition, at which Soviet trade agencies sponsored a display of modern tractors. The people of Calcutta liked to visit the Soviet exhibition. They showed a lively interest in Soviet films, and read Soviet journals and books.

People at the Calcutta port, whose docks and auxiliary installations stretch sixty kilometres along the waterfront, also have warm recollections of their Soviet friends. The flags of nearly all countries, including the Soviet, are seen there. Soviet sailors are welcome visitors in Calcutta. They are always well received by the dock hands. They contribute to greater friendship between the two countries. Visitors from the city often come on board the Soviet vessels. The Soviet sailors, in turn, hold amateur concerts on shore. They are met in the streets like close friends, with handshakes and requests to convey greetings to Russian brothers.

Bejoy Kumar Banerjee, the Mayor of Calcutta, told us:

"We have put aside all our usual affairs at the municipality. Everybody is busy with just one thing—preparing to welcome Premier Khrushchov and to hold a civic reception in his honour. Mr. Khrushchov's visit to Calcutta has roused general enthusiasm. I am sure that the visit to India by the head of the Soviet Government is a new great contribution to the maintenance and consolidation of universal peace and friendship and co-operation between our countries. As the first citizen of Calcutta elected by the people I now say: Welcome, distinguished guest!"

### OUR FRIENDSHIP WILL GROW

In welcoming Khrushchov, the capital of West Bengal congratulated the head of the Soviet Government on behalf of all India on the success of his mission of peace and friendship.

"The course of events in Asia," wrote the *Swadhinata*,

"shows that colonialism is losing its foothold in this part of the world and that favourable conditions are arising to maintain and strengthen universal peace. N. S. Khrushchov's trip to the countries of South-East Asia, Chou En-lai's acceptance of Nehru's invitation to meet in Delhi, and the victory of the 'clean' Anti-Fascist League in the elections in Burma—all this strengthens peace. This is why today Calcutta welcomes Khrushchov, the great fighter for peace."

The *Milap* daily, published in Urdu, observed:

"No one can deny Mr. Khrushchov's words that there is no other way to save the world than struggle for universal peace. Everybody in India highly appreciates his peace efforts. This is why India takes Khrushchov to her heart. Everyone respects and likes him.... Khrushchov is quite right in saying that those who start a war will be the first to perish in it. This is not a threat on his part, but a statement of an undeniable fact. At present Russian rockets are able to fly vast distances. Their atomic and hydrogen bombs are powerful. Their air force and navy are stronger than those of the others. And despite all this, Khrushchov says: 'The path of war is a wrong path. Wisdom lies in averting war.' By fighting for peace Khrushchov has become a great man throughout the world."

Hundreds upon hundreds of thousands came out into the streets again to welcome the distinguished Soviet visitor. The day, March 1, opened with a talk between Khrushchov and Sukarno, the President of Indonesia. Then there was the festive send-off in Jakarta, the distant flight over Sumatra, the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the talk with Prime Minister Nehru, a meeting with the envoys of the Indian people at the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, and finally a civic reception at the Ranji Stadium.

The reception at the Ranji Stadium was drawing to a close when a Bengal peasant ascended the platform and gave Khrushchov and Nehru a white dove each. The twen-



ty thousand gathered at the stadium applauded stormily. Nehru stroke his dove and released it. It soared up into the velvety blue sky. The dove perched on Khrushchov's palm would not fly. It was obviously warm and cosy in that strong hand. That was how the photographers snapped it.

Then the dove straightened its wings and flew away. It joined the dove sent skywards by Nehru, and tens of thousands of eyes followed their flight. It seemed that these two doves were a living symbol of the growing co-operation of two great peaceful nations in the struggle for peace.

Thinking back to these doves in the sky of Calcutta, the purport of the events of that big day—March 1, 1960—impresses itself most lucidly upon the mind.

Workers, students, office employees, industrialists, scientists, political leaders and members of all sections of the population holding different political views gathered that day in the Raj Bhavan Palace. They were brought together by the one desire to promote peace on earth and strengthen friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and India.

The head of the Soviet Government was met by the President of the Society, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, a prominent West Bengal statesman and public leader. Chatterji is Chairman of the State Legislative Council and also engaged in research in the field of comparative philology. He has translated *The Lay of Igor's Host* from the Russian, and has visited Moscow to attend the Slavist Congress.

Khrushchov thanked his Indian friends warmly.

At long last the ovation died down, Khrushchov and his party crossed the hall and ascended a platform, over which a gilt inscription in Russian said, "Welcome, Prime Minister Khrushchov!"

Strains of music were heard and two girls in bright Bengal saris sang a song of welcome written by Rabin-dranath Tagore:

O light, you have come,  
flinging open all doors.  
Glory to you  
who dispersed the darkness.  
Glory to you  
who came with the sun,  
who came boldly  
with the dawn of new life  
like some triumphant hero.  
And with radiant hope overthrew the eternal darkness!  
Let all chains fall apart, and you, bold and grand,  
arrive.  
Aye, glory to you!  
Kindle the fire of the sun in our minds,  
let death disappear from earth.  
The door shall open, all chains shall break  
and be ground to dust by the victorious storm,  
and your mighty clarion-call shall resound in the  
distance.

Applause broke out again when Prime Minister Nehru arrived. There was the traditional purple rose in the buttonhole of his white national costume.

Dr. Chatterji read a salutatory address to Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov, and Professor Roy translated it into Russian sentence by sentence.

"Permit us, members of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society of West Bengal, to welcome Your Excellency to our famous city. . . .

"You have been the greatest champion of peace and friendship among nations ever since you became First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. You are not only a champion of peace, but an indefatigable fighter for the liberation of peoples who are still under colonial yoke. Your historic appeal for general and com-



plete disarmament has won the hearts of millions of men and women the world over....

"We hardly need assure you that we as a cultural organisation have been striving for several years now to bring to our people the inspiring news of your accomplishments, and especially of the unselfish aid the Soviet Union is rendering the backward countries of Asia and Africa...."

The Secretary-General of the Society, Professor J. Sen, of Calcutta University, handed Khrushchov the text of the address, lovingly engraved on a copper sheet by Bengal engravers, in a velvet case.

May it live down the centuries! J. Sen then handed Khrushchov souvenirs and gifts from members of the Society. Among them were carved ivory statuettes, scenes from Bengal epics drawn on silk, and paintings.

Subha Prasana, a talented artist, handed Khrushchov two paintings on behalf of the youth of Calcutta. One was dedicated to Lenin's 90th birthday anniversary, showing Lenin as he stands pensively beside a window. It symbolises the window to the happy future of mankind cut by the founder of the first socialist state. The other painting shows Khrushchov and Nehru shaking hands—a handshake of friendship and unity in the struggle for peace.

There is yet another valuable gift—a modest file of journals published by the Society to tell the Indian people about the Soviet Union, the life of Soviet people, of their struggle for peace and friendship among nations.

Khrushchov thanked the gathering for the warm reception and reassured it that the Soviet Union would continue to strengthen its friendship with India.

"We are very pleased with the relations that have been established between our two countries," Khrushchov said. "The Indian Prime Minister is here, and I believe that he, too, is satisfied with the amicable relations between India and the Soviet Union."

The audience responded to the statement with applause. Jawaharlal Nehru nodded his head in agreement.

Khrushchov then spoke of the prospects for strengthening the friendly relations between the U.S.S.R. and India, the great successes of the Soviet Union and the advantages of the socialist over the capitalist system.

The gathering showed a special interest in Khrushchov's words, when he said with his usual candour:

"It may be said that this Communist chap Khrushchov praises communism wherever he gets up to speak. Yes, that is so, and I consider it quite natural. After all, if in addressing some meeting abroad or in my own country, I were suddenly to begin praising capitalism, this would be more of a sensation, perhaps, than if a hen suddenly began to crow. Wherever I am, I always say what I think, I always express my views. But this by no means implies that I expect my hearers to share these views.

"I say: here is what we have achieved in forty years of Soviet power. Here, I say, is what we were and what we have become. Look, here is the capitalist world, and here is our, socialist world. I do not boast. The goods, so to say, speak for themselves."

The forceful words of the speaker found a quick response. There was animation in the hall, and applause burst out constantly.

Khrushchov continued:

"The development of states, their economy and culture, is the internal affair of the people of every country. We are friends with many countries and we are prepared to extend our friendship with all countries, including those with whom our relations are not quite good at present. The social or state system of a country must not be a barrier to the establishment of friendly relations between states. We must all be mindful of the fact that we are living on the same planet, on this earth of ours which with modern means of communication is quite small....

"We must take this into account and strengthen good-neighbourly relations and do all we can to enable the peoples to live in friendship and peace. As for what social and



political system is the more sound and just, let the peoples of each country settle that question for themselves. Let history decide. After all, history is the best and most impartial of judges. Let us submit to the verdict of history."

Khrushchov again thanked the leaders of the Society and Prime Minister Nehru, and said:

"He is not a member of your Society, just as, formally, I am not a member of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society. But I believe that Mr. Nehru is a friend of the Soviet Union, just as I, in my turn, consider myself a friend of India. I therefore take the liberty of shaking his hand."

Khrushchov shook Nehru's hand firmly as the audience applauded.

The representatives of the Indian people saw Khrushchov off in a cordial and fraternal spirit. Giving voice to their sentiments, Dr. Chatterji said in a talk with one of us:

"What a fine reception! Mr. Khrushchov's visit here furnishes lasting conditions for the triumph of peace in Asia. Your Premier is a great champion of peace. I take this opportunity to say once more that we are grateful to Russia for her contribution to the cause of peace. And, believe me, India will not spare her efforts either in the interests of peace."

The Soviet journalists accompanying Khrushchov on his tour had their work cut out for them. They had to be on the spot when the various functions started, to see them end, to write up what they saw and come in time to see the opening of the next function. Yet the functions succeeded each other at so rapid a rate that it was hard to be on time.

Yet we could not deny ourselves the pleasure of seeing Calcutta. Many of us had come there for the first time.

To do so we emerged from the Grand Hotel, one of the finest Calcutta hotels on the Chowringhee, where the city fathers had put us up hospitably. The usual guests at the hotel are overseas, chiefly American, tourists. The door-

man bowed politely in his Punjab turban with the tall starched "crest". A crowd of street vendors attacked us as we emerged from the hotel doors, offering enticements which, they thought, could interest a foreign tourist.

"Money change?"

"Girls?"

"Rickshaw?"

"Taxi?"

The journalists brushed the importunate "businessmen" aside. But the assault continued. Finally, one of us said resolutely:

"We are Soviet."

"We'll take you to the industrial exhibition in that case."

The episode mirrored the treatment of people from different worlds. Calcutta knows the habits of the spendthrift overseas "civilisers" roaming the world in search of excitement only too well. It was here, in Calcutta, that the personnel of the U.S. Information Service, whose morals differ little from those of the "meteorological service" which sent Powers to "test the air" over Sverdlovsk, organised a rickshaw race. It was here, from the windows of the Grand Hotel, that intoxicated American officers dressed in civilian clothes threw small change to see the beggars crawling about the pavement in search of stray coins, while one of the Americans filmed the savage scene with his cine-camera until outraged pedestrians took it from him and exposed the film.

Yes, Calcutta knows the customs of American visitors only too well. But the Bengalese also learned to know other people—the simple, modest Soviet people en route to Bhilai via Calcutta, and the Soviet tourists, eager to see and learn as much as possible about their friendly neighbour.

Perhaps the Calcutta rickshaw puller did not know who we were. We walked along the pavement and he jogged alongside with his rickshaw, waving his arm and repeating that one word:



"Sahib, sahib. . . ."

Sahib, master. . . . Calcutta, like the rest of India, had for centuries known "white sahibs", white masters who did not walk on foot, lived in luxurious villas, and did whatever they pleased. One had to stand before them, bent forward respectfully. They could hit one, or slap one's face, or charitably throw one a few coins.

"Sahib, sahib," the rickshaw puller pleaded.

He could not understand why we walked. The "sahibs" were not likely to be out of money. It is nothing to them to ride a rickshaw a few blocks, see the sights and let a poor man earn a rupee. Rupees were badly wanted—to eat, and to feed the family. Step after step, block after block, came the plaintive, pleading call:

"Sahib, sahib."

How to tell the lad that the grandfathers of the "sahibs" whom he was following were feudal slaves, that their fathers were field hands and loaders, and that, as a matter of fact, some of the "sahibs" themselves had started out in life as street urchins? How to tell him that we had long since done away with the word "master", together with the tsar's throne, the gendarme's whip and the capitalist ministers? How to tell him that a Soviet citizen would not ride a rickshaw no matter who pulls it—an Indian, a Japanese, or an African?

The best thing to do was to stop and say just one word—Comrade.

You may be sure that the emaciated Calcutta rickshaw puller will understand you, and your attitude will be dearer to him than the rupees he needs so badly.

A Soviet man sees the still unhealed wounds of Calcutta, but he will never lacerate them. He respects Calcutta, and Calcutta respects Soviet men.

Evening fell.

The short route from Raj Bhavan to the Ranji Stadium

that occupies a section of the spacious Maidan was lined with tens of thousands of people. They were there to welcome Khrushchov and Nehru, going to the civic reception for the Soviet visitor.

The immense grandstands of the stadium, many stories high, were filled to overflowing. They looked like a solid wall of humanity. Thousands more squatted on the green field before the high platform for the guests of honour. Representatives of Calcutta people, students and teachers, government employees, art workers and businessmen were invited. And many more thousands milled outside the stadium gates to hear Khrushchov speak.

All this mass of people stormily welcomed Calcutta's guest of honour as he and Prime Minister Nehru ascended the platform. They chanted over and over:

"Long Live Khrushchov!"

"Long Live Indo-Soviet Friendship!"

"Long Live World Peace!"

The city Mayor, B. K. Banerjee, read an address to Khrushchov, welcoming the visitor and expressing "most sincere respect for the Soviet Union, a true friend of the Indian people."

His simple and moving words seemed to come in the festive silence from the very heart of the fine city of Calcutta.

"The city of Calcutta may rightfully be called a pioneer of India's national struggle for liberation. The roots of this struggle go back to the 19th century, a time of our national awakening and cultural renaissance. Blood of the fighters against British imperialist slavery was shed on the paving stones and dry earth of Calcutta. On both banks of the Ganges people of labour, men and women, brought nearer by each drop of the sweat of their toil, the establishment of a new mode of life in our society. The rebellious energy of Calcutta's youth time and again, like a river, overflowed the banks and merged with the common stream of the Asian people's struggle for liberation....

"Calcutta is a fount of invigorating currents of ideas in





On his arrival in India, Premier Khrushchov is welcomed at Palam Airport by President Prasad, Prime Minister Nehru and Vice-President Radhakrishnan



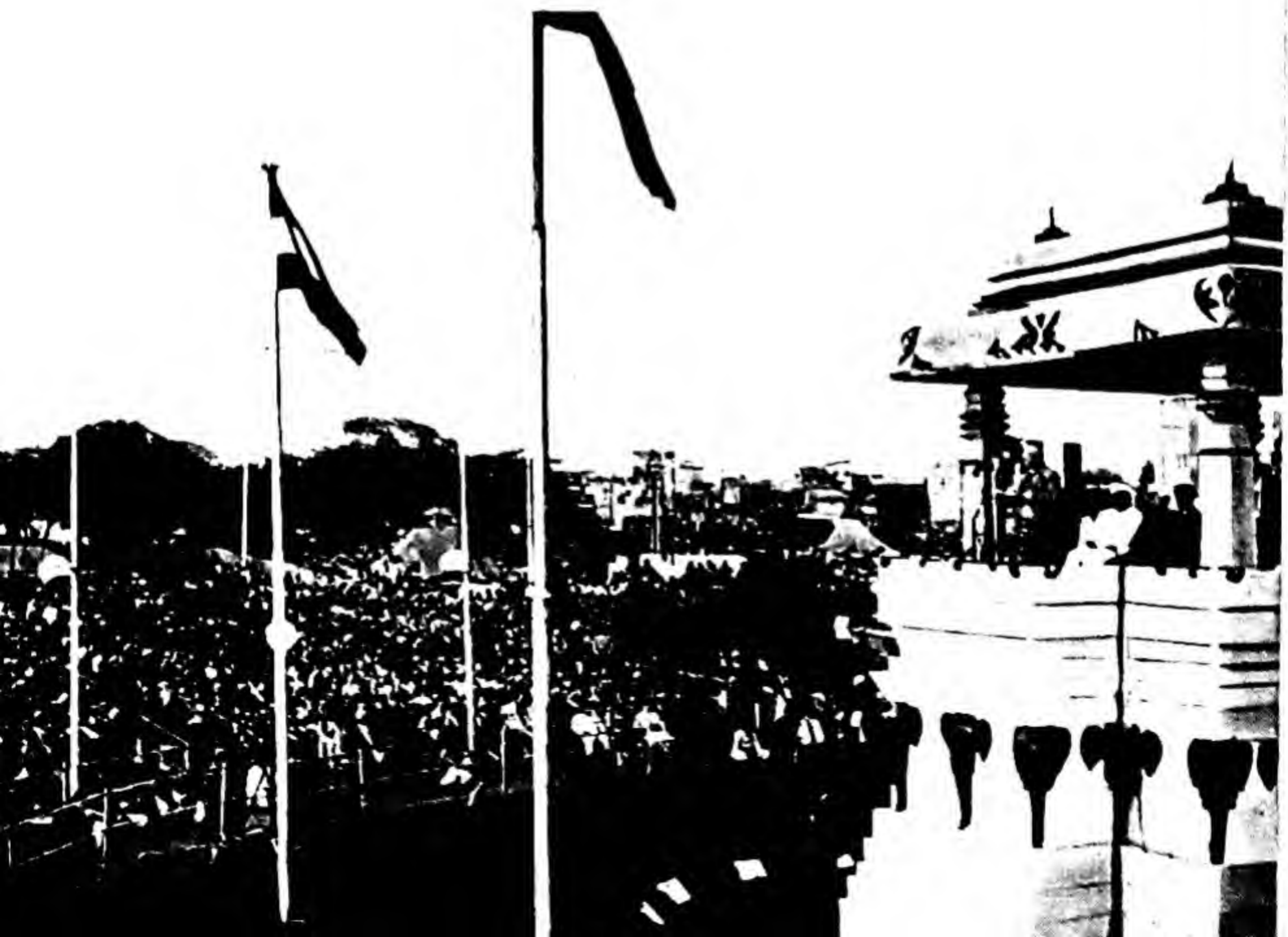
"Khrushchov zinda badi!" "Hurrah for Khrushchov!" "Namaste!"  
 "Long live Indo-Soviet friendship!" It was with those heart-stirring words that Delhi welcomed its old and great friend







Hundreds of thousands of people gathered at Ramlila Grounds at a gala civic reception given by the Indian capital for the head of the Soviet Government. Premier Khrushchov finished his speech with a phrase that has become a symbol of Soviet-Indian friendship, "Hindi Rusi bhai bhai!"





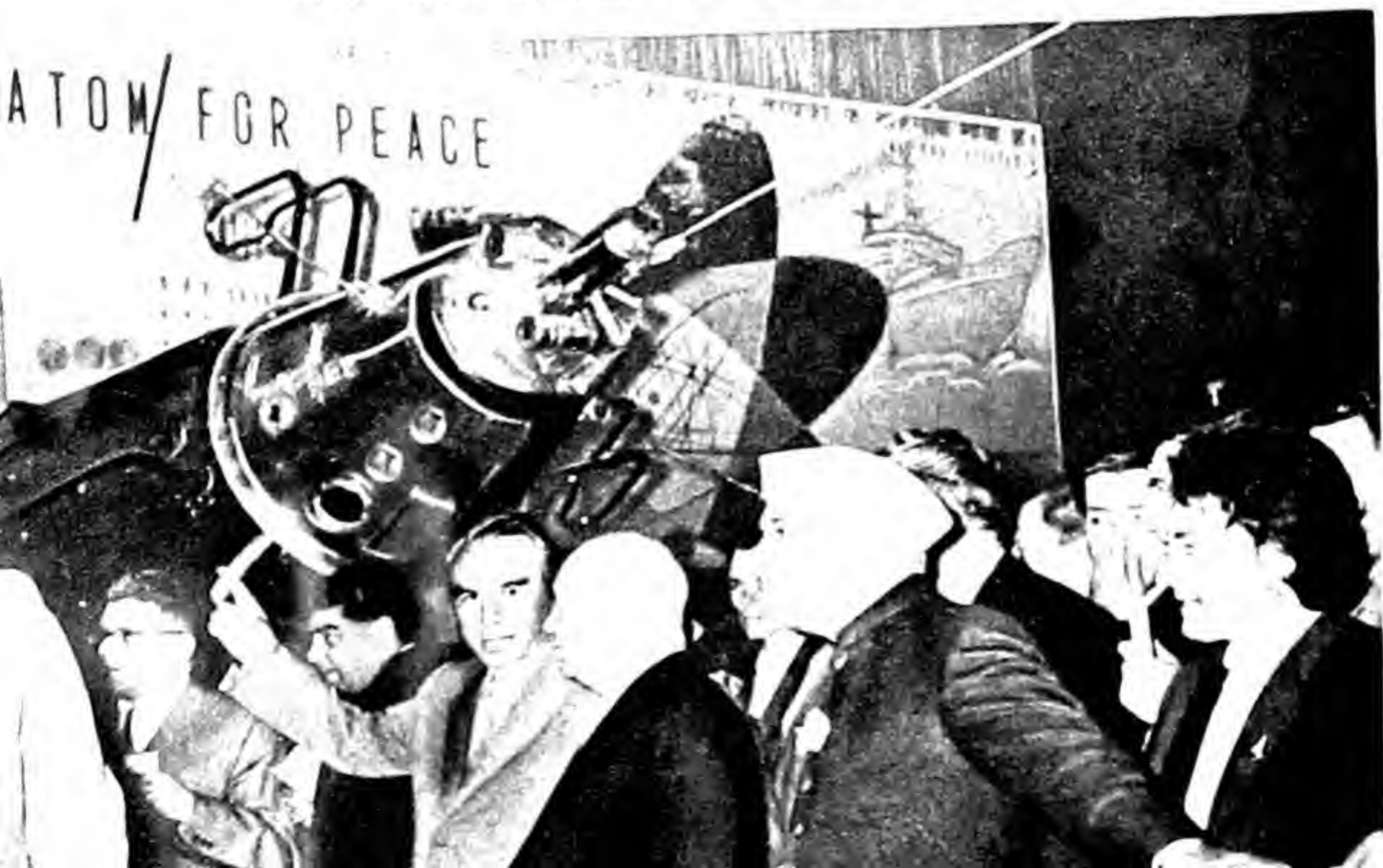




Khrushchov and Nehru carry on an animated conversation in the Prime Minister's residence. This building was formerly the home of the commander-in-chief of the British colonial troops. Yes, times have indeed changed!



Accompanied by Nehru, Khrushchov visits the World Agriculture Fair. In the Soviet Pavilion all the exhibits, from the handsome Ahal Tekke stallions to the models of sputniks, attract attention





Premier Khrushchov delivered a lengthy address to the Indian Parliament on the day of his arrival in India





At the mechanised farm in Suratgarh, set up with the help of the Soviet Union on land reclaimed from the desert





"Namaste!" the head of the Soviet Government and an ordinary craftsman say to each other. He presented Premier Khrushchov with an inlaid table

Premier Khrushchov plants the first tangerine tree of a future orchard at the farm in Suratgarh.  
May this tree of friendship thrive and bear rich fruit!



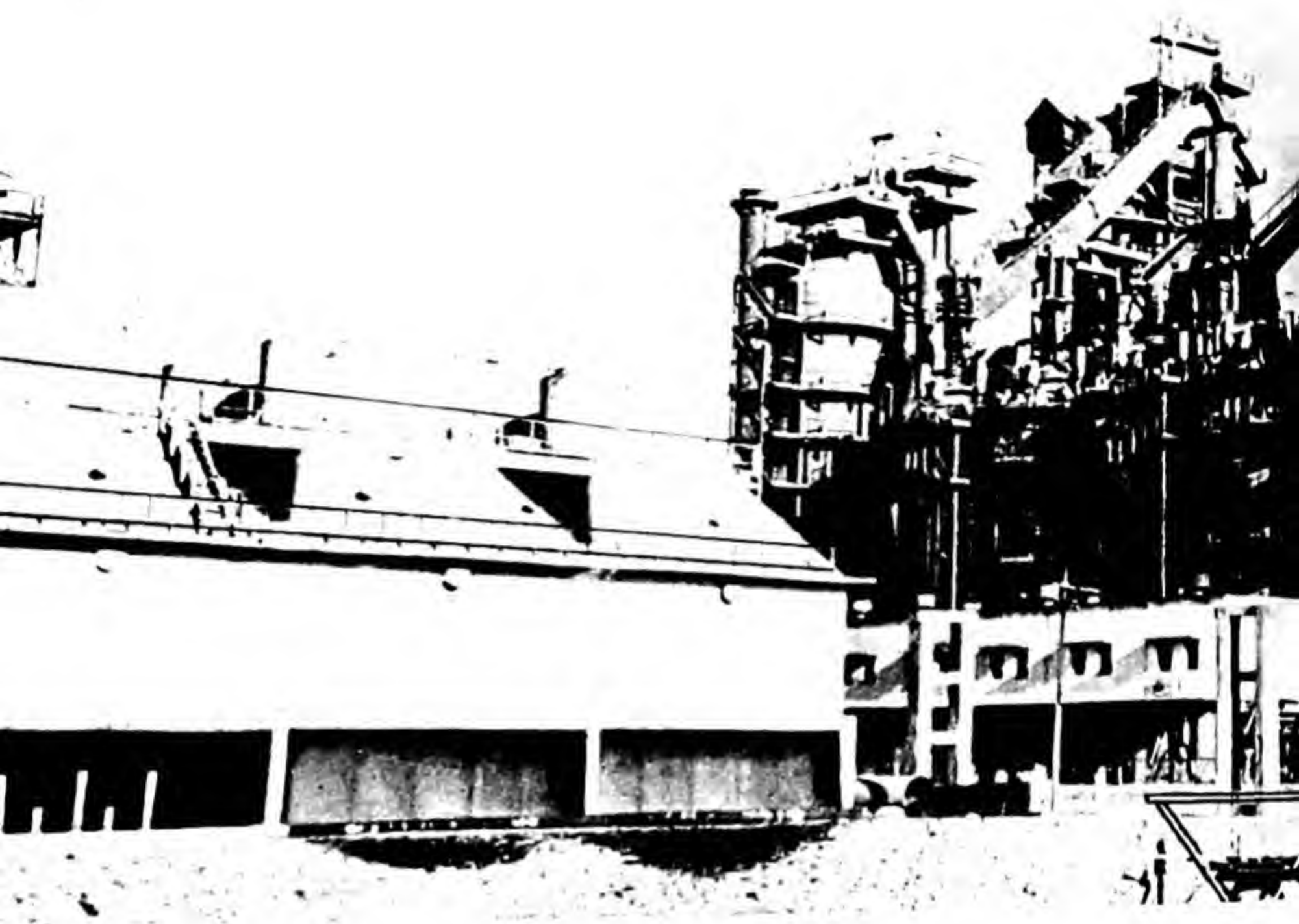


A rally of Indian iron and steel workers. "May the heat of the Bhilai Works keep forever warm the relations between our peoples!" said Premier Khrushchov

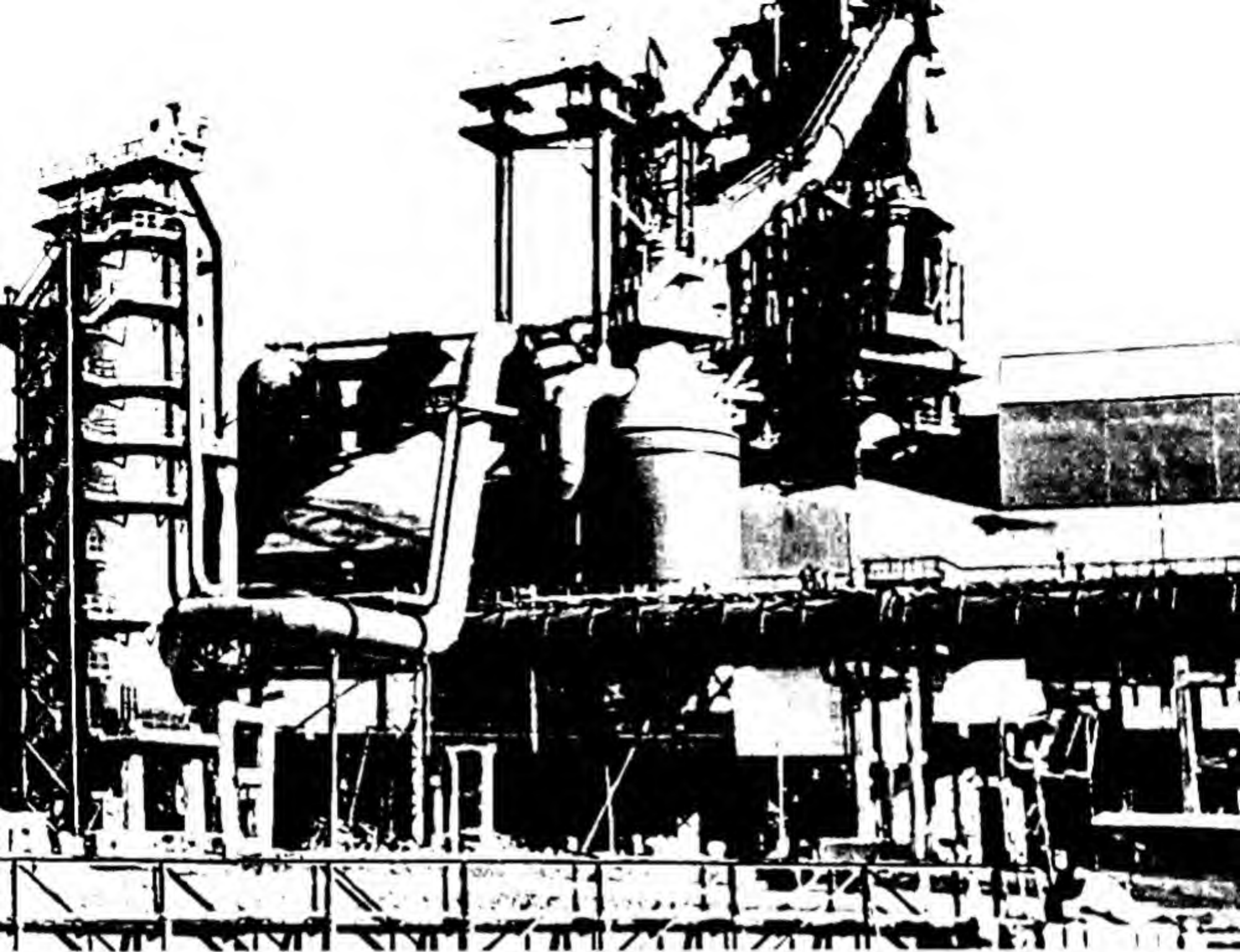












Bhilai, India's future. It stands as a symbol of Soviet-Indian friendship, as strong as steel

Soviet specialists pass on their knowledge and experience to Indian friends. Here we see men at work on the hoisting installation of a blast furnace



Premier Khrushchov is shown round the Bhilai Works by the General Manager, N. Shrivastava, the Chief Engineer, N. V. Goldin, and representatives of the factory management and the authorities of the state of Madhya Pradesh

At an exhibition of the paintings of Svyatoslav Roerich, which have been called "a hymn to the beauty of the people and landscape of India"







May friendship and co-operation between the Soviet Union and India grow stronger! As Khrushchov and Nehru look on, G. A. Zhukov and Minister H. Kabir sign an agreement on cultural co-operation



present-day India, and we welcome you here with love that comes from the heart.

"O envoy of peace!

"Our great city is an ardent supporter of the idea of international unity. Writers and scientists of this city, its political and religious leaders, have constantly propagated the idea of peace and friendship among men, have composed songs about the emancipation of oppressed mankind. With indefatigable energy, ever since 1955, you have been carrying from country to country that same idea of universal peace and friendship.

"Your activity is as remarkable as the great achievements of Soviet science, which has penetrated into outer space and conquered the moon.

"May your sputniks and rockets carry messages of peace and progress to the planets and stars.

"May India's age-old hatred of war, violence, greed and oppression merge with the peace-loving aspirations of the peoples of the Soviet Union and bring mankind to a splendid era of progress. That is the cherished dream of the citizens of Calcutta."

The Mayor then presented Khrushchov with gifts, among them a large portrait of Rabindranath Tagore, a native of Bengal and a great son of the Indian people. The splendid old man looked down from the canvas, it seemed, to see how strong the tree of friendship between the peoples of India and the Soviet Union had become, which he had tended in the grim years of British rule.

Khrushchov stepped up to the microphone.

His words about India's efforts to develop her national economy and culture, about her people's initial efforts to advance agriculture, about the glorious Bhilai where a new breed of men is being born who, "are breaking down the old foundations, as it were, and replacing them by new and improved foundations, for without the new there is no movement forward", rang out most convincingly in this city which the colonialists had wanted to turn into a cita-

del of their rule over the East, this capital of Bengal which they had plundered so pitilessly.

"The people of the Republic of India are now seeing from their own experience that without building a heavy industry it is impossible to make progress in consolidating the country's economic independence and, consequently, its political independence," Khrushchov said. "Of course, this is not an easy road, but it is the only sure one. We are confident that the Indian people will cope with the difficulties. Let the sceptics doubt, let the dogs bark, the Indian elephant will march on along the road it has chosen."

This metaphor from the old Russian fable sounded very apt in connection with the attacks launched by the reactionary transatlantic press on India's policy. The people gathered at the meeting responded to the speaker's words with applause.

"And the time will come," Khrushchov continued, "when your great country will occupy a worthy place among the economically developed countries, when the mark 'Made in India' will be not less known to the world than the mark on goods manufactured in the most highly developed industrial countries."

One should have seen the faces of the people who heard these encouraging words. There was pride in them for their country, faith in their own strength, and gratitude to the man who spoke about the most important thing—the future, and who spoke words which went from heart to heart. The people of Calcutta applauded them enthusiastically. There were shouts of "Hear, hear!" and "Spasibo!"

Then Nehru stepped up to the microphone, in a white jacket with the purple rose in his buttonhole, and in the white traditional head-dress—just as he had looked in Moscow in 1955, only a touch older. Time takes its toll. He spoke slowly and quietly, but each word resounded through the stadium and far beyond it.

"Khrushchov's words and his speeches promote peace



and are addressed to all nations," India's Prime Minister said. "Khrushchov wants all the material blessings which mankind now possesses to be put at the service of peace, at the service of prosperity of the nations. . . . We want to learn from other countries, we want to learn from the Soviet Union, that great industrial power. We want to borrow much from the achievements of such a great country as the Soviet Union, but we cannot allow ourselves to copy blindly, we must remain ourselves. . . . Peace is a necessity for all nations. It is still more necessary for the peoples of Asia and Africa, the peoples of the economically under-developed countries."

In conclusion, Nehru said:

"I hope, our dear guest, that you will remember your visit to India. You should remember that the Indian people love you and admire you."

This was just when the scene occurred that we related above, and the white doves ascended into the Calcutta sky from the hands of the two Premiers.

May they fly far, across seas and oceans, across all the continents—simple and pure symbols of peace and friendship!

\* \* \*

Years will go by. The arms race will be forgotten, and armies and military budgets will be forgotten as well. There will be no military blocs and no rocket bases, and no policy of espionage and perfidy.

Tourists will fly to the moon to gape at its craters, illuminated by the glow of the distant Earth, or to Mars, to roam the banks of its mysterious "canals".

More wonderful still will be the Soviet land, transformed and improved by the labour of millions of free people. But what of India?

Blossoming gardens and fields will take the place of the sun-scorched deserts. New factories will rise skywards. Hydropower stations will straddle the powerful Indian riv-

ers. Indian oil will run along the pipelines, and Indians will forget there ever was Standard Oil and Burma Shell. Thousands of schools, theatres, hospitals, kindergartens and nurseries will spring up throughout the Indian land like cradles of the new life. Calcutta and Old Delhi will heal their age-old wounds, and the stone and bronze images named Robert Clive, Hastings and Curzon will be shown solely in museums.

Years will pass and much change will occur in the world.

Historians will study the past. They will rummage in archives and write papers and books. Among the documents of Indo-Soviet friendship they will come upon a document modestly titled Joint Soviet-Indian Communiqué, signed February 16, 1960, in Delhi. Our descendants will read the lines of that communiqué with emotion, just as we read it, who attended its signing by Nikita Khrushchov and Jawaharlal Nehru:

“The Prime Minister of India reiterated his high opinion of Khrushchov’s proposals for general disarmament.

“In the eyes of India, these proposals are virtually a call to apply the principle of non-use of force in settling international problems. The interest evoked by these proposals in all countries and especially in the United Nations was not merely an expression of the moral sentiments of man, but a distinct realisation of the danger of a nuclear war. The two Prime Ministers reaffirmed their positions with regard to the banning of thermonuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction....

“In the talks with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and other statesmen of India, N. S. Khrushchov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., spoke highly of the policy of neutrality and non-participation in military alliances pursued by India. He underlined that this policy is profoundly respected in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government is convinced that by pursuing such a policy India, and personally her Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru,



are contributing substantially towards the maintenance and consolidation of peace throughout the world. . . .

"As regards India and the Soviet Union, the relations between them have never before rested on a more solid basis of friendship and understanding than at the present time. Their common allegiance to the principles of peaceful coexistence and their common determination to promote the establishment of lasting peace have drawn them close together, and have considerably expanded the sphere of fruitful co-operation between them in the United Nations and outside it. The two countries share the conviction that the remarkable progress that has now been achieved in science and technology, in which the Soviet Union has won a leading place, will be of little benefit to mankind unless the world is delivered from the impending threat of war and the foundations for lasting peace are laid. Disarmament, friendship among nations and rapid development in regions of the world that for a long time suffered from poverty and backwardness are the factors really preventing war from being unleashed. . . .

"The two Prime Ministers were happy to note that the relations between the two countries in the economic and cultural fields are no less close. Economic and technical co-operation between India and the Soviet Union embraces a considerable number of building projects. . . . An agreement on cultural, scientific and technical co-operation was signed between the two countries for the first time."

And maybe the historian will learn with interest on that future day that even then, twenty years after India's independence was proclaimed, the people of India realised what an abyss lay between the past and the present.

At the banquet for the distinguished Soviet guest, Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, thanked Khrushchov warmly for the tremendous contribution which the Soviet Government and its head were making to the promotion of peace and friendly relations with India. He voiced deep

satisfaction over the successful development of Soviet-Indian economic and cultural co-operation.

"There was a custom once," Prasad said, "of immortalising big events with monuments of stone, brick and marble. But, however valuable these monuments may be, the real monuments of our era, in my opinion, will be the new enterprises built and the progress made in the economic and other fields of human endeavour by various countries on the basis of co-operation, goodwill and mutual assistance."

Indeed, every era produces its own memory of events, and there are different monuments. It does not matter on whose orders Taj Mahal and the Red Fort were built. The important thing is that they reflect the genius of the creative Indian people and that these creations have become a possession of the nation.

But in many Eastern countries there are still monuments of yet another epoch—the sinister epoch of colonialism. Evident at every step, they are poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and economic backwardness. Calcutta, too, bears traces of the nearly two centuries of colonial rule. Yes, it is today something like a giant monument to the tragedy which India has gone through—a monument to the heroic struggle of its industrious and gallant people.

But monuments of the new epoch have already come into being. In India they are Bhilai and Suratgarh. Such monuments of equal collaboration have also appeared in other Eastern countries. Colonialism was unable to create such monuments. They were created by the socialist epoch, the epoch of struggle for the independence of the Asian and African countries, their solidarity with the socialist countries.

Capitalism gave rise to the spirit of profiteering and colonial plunder.

Socialism gave rise to the spirit of Bhilai, the spirit of equal collaboration and fraternal friendship.

The Soviet Union appreciates the desire of the Eastern



countries to build up their own industry, a foundation of independence. Before the Soviet people were able to develop the world's first sputniks and luniks, they had had to devote considerable effort to building their first tractors and power stations. The Soviet people have worked diligently to turn backward Russia into a great country with a highly developed industry and agriculture, a country of the most advanced system of public education, science and culture.

During Khrushchov's stay in India Kanu Ponda, a Bombay reader of the weekly *Blitz* asked:

"Why do most Russian leaders' names end in a 'v'? For victory?!"

There is a lot to that artless jest. Yes, the Soviet people have achieved outstanding and unprecedented victories. And the Soviet people have always been ready to extend selfless assistance to their brothers abroad.

"In rendering assistance to countries that have taken the path of independent development, we make no political demands infringing on their sovereignty and humiliating the dignity of their peoples," Khrushchov said at the meeting in Delhi. "As you know, we grant loans on most favourable terms. It is not for profit that the Soviet Union renders assistance. True to the behests of their teacher, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the peoples of the Soviet Union want not only to live well themselves, but to see all other peoples live well."

"For all other peoples to live well...."

These words may serve as an epigraph to the Soviet policy of peace, to the policy of the Communist Party, of which Khrushchov's visit to India in February 1960 was a token.





# ***THE VISIT TO BURMA***







## **FIVE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE YEARS**

### **FROM ZERO ALTITUDE**

Time is a relative concept not only in science and in outer space. It is so also on earth and in politics. Flying in a plane like the IL-18, it takes a few hours to cover distances it took months and years to cover in the past. When one flies on the wings of peace and friendship, when one comes with an open heart to a friend, one can, within a few hours, find a common language with him and reach agreement on matters which some international conferences take months and years to settle.

Community of good purposes reduces distances at a speed no intercontinental ballistic rocket can match. The Soviet Premier's visit to Burma lasted only forty-three hours, but in that brief span one could feel, to quote Khrushchov, "how high the prestige of our socialist country is and what an attentive ear is lent to its voice even in countries as remote from ours as that".

Wherein lay the impact of these forty-three hours? First and foremost in the fact that compressed in them were the ten October days which shook the world, ushering in the era of its renovation; compressed in them were the years of war against nazi Germany and militarist Japan, with the Soviet Union contributing decisively to victory;

compressed in them were the decades of the Soviet people's struggle for world peace, against war and colonialism. In short, there would have been no forty-three hours in Burma without the forty-three years of our mighty socialist state.

To get some idea of the impact of these forty-three hours, one must take a look at the five thousand years of Burma's history, the hundred years of British colonial rule in Burma and the twelve years of Burma's independence. The grim century of slavery almost completely blotted out 5,000 years of a great and ancient civilisation, and the short twelve years of independence showed what horizons open up before a nation when it becomes its own master.

We take advantage of the two-hour flight from Calcutta to Rangoon to tell you about these five millenniums, the century and the twelve years. Much of what you will read in the earlier chapters are our own observations. Happily, some of us have been in Burma before, and at different times. We have drawn much on works devoted to that country's nature, history, economy and culture, to Russo-Burmese and Soviet-Burmese relations.

\* \* \*

Rangoon is a little more than 1,000 kilometres from Calcutta. We are flying over the Bay of Bengal. It is ablaze with the golden-blue glow of the tropical, mercilessly torrid sun. Its rays have erased the line between sky and water and turned our huge plane into a blinding sunbeam reflected with a pocket mirror.

Only an hour after the plane took off from the concrete runway of the Dum-Dum Airport in Calcutta we reached Burma, the land of golden pagodas. In Moscow it is dawn, and here it is high noon. The sky is cloudless. It is boundless, bottomless, breathtakingly blue.

From an altitude of ten kilometres Burma is reminiscent of a relief map in a school atlas. If you take an ordinary map of South-East Asia and trace the borders of



Burma with a pencil, it will very nearly form a regular rhombus, its area amounting to all of 678,000 square kilometres, or to two and a half times that of Britain.

There are no seasons here in the usual sense of the word—no winters, no autumns, no springs, and no summers. The best way to describe the seasons is hot, very hot, and unbearably hot.

These seasons are governed by winds blowing from the ocean, the monsoons. When the air pressure over the Indo-Chinese Peninsula drops sharply, Burma is invaded by south-western monsoons. They carry inexhaustible amounts of humidity from the vast Indian Ocean and then, from May to October, Burma seems to be soaked through and through. There is so much mould, one takes it for a penicillin paradise.

Towards the end of October the south-western monsoons give way to their north-eastern counterpart, and winter comes to Burma. We visited Burma in winter and can testify that it is only in dreams that one sees snow there.

March ushers in a dry hot season of changing winds and storms. That is when the sun really becomes equatorially hot! The earth loses its coat of grass and the trees shed their leaves. It becomes harder and harder to breathe and one feels like a fish cast out of water, or rather like a fish cast on a hot frying-pan. Then comes April, the hottest month of the year.

After that the atmospheric pressure over Indo-China drops again. The moisture-laden south-eastern monsoons advance on Burma, and the cycle starts over again.

Burma is a land of mountains and forests. The mountains, by the way, act as a kind of rain distributor. Where the monsoons are most generous and the mountains do not open up their "umbrellas", are amphitheatres and tiers of tropical jungle. It is reminiscent of the immense jeweller's shop in the country of giants, which Gulliver encountered in his travels. The rhododendron branches are studded with rubies and pure-water diamonds, graceful orchids and

magnolias are adorned with necklaces of emerald leaves. Leaving the "jeweller's shop", you find yourself in tropical leaf-losing, or monsoon, forests. Their chief wealth is teak. The teak merits a more detailed description. It is often forty metres high and four metres in circumference. A newly felled teak is heavier than water and does not float. For that reason it is deeply ringed. In a year or two the tree dries and becomes stronger and lighter. It is then felled and rafted down to the sawmills.

The Burmese teak has been used for ships from time immemorial. The Genoese navigators and Arab pirates owe much to the teak. When the British seized Lower Burma they hastened to proclaim it the property of the British Crown and strictly prohibited felling it without permission. After that the Burmese teak was used to enhance the naval power of Britain. The Burmese who felled it without a warrant had their hands or heads cut off. But the teak, true to its reputation, proved stronger than the British colonial regime in Burma. Today the resources of teak are the property of the state and an important item of export.

In areas where the monsoon rains are less generous lie subtropical forests and laurel groves. Still higher up are the oaks, chestnuts and maples. Finally, up in the highland, the leaves' rustle gives place to the creaking of pines, and the aroma of lemons to the fragrance of conifers. The forest glades have a savanna-like blanket of grass, dotted with thickets of acacia and euphorbia.

Yes, Burma's flora is rich and varied. Sugar cane grows there, and tea, tung, coffee and bread-trees. There are bananas, apples, grapes, citrus fruit, mangoes and durians. The last named, often bigger than a basket-ball, are covered with sharp burs. Then there is a profusion of palms—date palms, coconut palms and fan palms.

Apart from the rest stand the banyans, giant fig trees which are considered sacred. It was under a banyan, says the legend, that the Hindu Prince Gautama, having renounced his family and worldly riches, achieved the highest



state of bliss, of nirvana, and became Buddha, the enlightened one.

While the banyans make one think of Buddha, the bamboo calls forth more prosaic associations. Bamboo is used to build huts. The trunk goes for the piles, bamboo mats serve as walls; the big bamboo stems go to make floors, stairs—railings and steps—and fences; smaller ones are utilised for screens, window shades, ceilings and roofs. There are more than 2,000,000 houses like that in Burma and 90 per cent of her 20-million population live in them. The furniture in the bamboo huts is made of bamboo. The bamboo-hut dwellers have bamboo umbrellas and bamboo hats; they drink from bamboo vessels, put flowers in bamboo vases, keep the family "fortune" in bamboo boxes, and use bamboo shoots in their food. Burma's annual bamboo output is 8,000,000 cubic metres.

The plane begins its descent. As the engines die down the map of Burma comes to life. Below, between mountain ranges, flows the majestic Irrawaddy, the soul of Burma, sung and cursed by Rudyard Kipling, the marvelous story-teller and mediocre missionary, the man who read "The Jungle Book" and venerated the Bible, who shed the time-worn snakeskin of Western civilisation for a Tommy Atkins uniform, who wore a coat of mail under his cassock and concealed a bayonet behind his pen.

All his life, Rudyard Kipling, the poet and sahib, looked down upon the Irrawaddy with a sense of mingling envy and fastidiousness. He looked down upon it, and that is why he saw Burma only as a vast roadstead where the haughty dreadnoughts of the "ruler of the waves" cast their heavy anchors and raised the muzzles of their heavy guns.

The Burmese, whose life is tied up intimately with the Irrawaddy, call it the gift of God. Hear the splashing of its waves, they tell you the legend that once upon a time, when

the earth was young, there lived in what today is the river bed the God of Rain, Irrawaddy, and the river flowed from the trunk of his favourite white elephant. That, of course, belongs to the realm of mythology. Geography tells a different story. It tells us that the Irrawaddy takes its waters from the fast mountain streams in the Tibetan highland.

The waters of the Chindwin swell the Irrawaddy and turn it from a wild mountain gazelle into a staid, benevolent elephant. It crosses most of Burma, cutting her in two—the eastern and western—parts. Its “trunk” is 2,000 kilometres long and standing on its banks are three ancient capitals—Mandalay, Prome and Pagan.

The Irrawaddy is Burma's main water-way, its agricultural and transport artery. Its delta is the country's “rice bowl”. And it is not at all surprising that it fell prey to the colonialist vampires, who established the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co., Ltd. But the white elephant threw off the British lion and, raising its trunk, trumpeted the call of victory.

Inaccessible tropical jungle, swampy and mist-laden; dunes and sandbanks covered with mangrove woods; limestone precipices, the poisonous verdure of orchids, the blood-red buds of the wisteria, the autumn gold of the bamboo—all these are part of the Irrawaddy landscape.

Burmese waters seethe with life. Although there are no “Danger! No Swimming!” notices anywhere, everybody knows there are crocodiles around. And many turtles. And an incredible variety of snakes and lizards. The biggest snakes are the python boas, some of which are up to ten metres long. The pythons are meek. Not so are some of the other reptiles. Take the cobra. It is a regular scourge in Burma. Thousands of people die from its bite every year. And yet it is a sacrilege for a Burmese to kill a cobra.

Here is a little story told by Prime Minister U Nu in his book *Burma Under the Japanese*.

“Next door to me,” he writes, “there lived a man called Khin Maung who bred fowls, and a large cobra used to come and eat his eggs and chickens. Of course it was



dangerous too for his household, and they often ran out of the house shrieking, 'Snake, snake!' As we lived so near, my household too was frightened. One day Khin Maung saw the head of the snake poking out of a rat hole near the latrine and pinned it to the ground with a dart. He came rushing to me to take my big gun as he had stuck the snake with a dart. As soon as I heard him shouting, I jumped up and got my gun. But I had barely gone half-way when it occurred to me that if I injured the snake I should be transgressing the percept 'Thou shalt not kill', and remembered the text that 'All living creatures are subject to their destiny'. So I turned back with the gun. Just as I was putting it away it occurred to me that if I spared the snake it would bite men; 'Fate won't save you from pricks if you tread on thorns.' So I took up the gun again and with a heavy mind set out to shoot it. But just as I was going to fire, the snake shook itself free and disappeared."

The Burmese say people must live by the law, "Love for love, evil for evil". Yes, they know how to return love for love. Anyone can see it who has been to Burma, anyone who, as Premier Khrushchov said on his arrival at Mingaladon Airport, comes to a friend with an open heart. But he who comes with a gun in hand, who sets fire to the Burman's hut, who lays chains on him and drives away his cattle, better beware, for he will be repaid measure for measure.

It is not only a matter of the natural urge to defend oneself, to save oneself when one's life is in danger. It would be a mistake to think that the contemporary Burmese lack the feeling of fraternal solidarity, that they do not understand the social purport of world developments. Here is a story we would like to relate. Let the reader draw his own conclusions.

One of us happened to be spending a few days in Rangoon in November 1956. The reader will recall that this was the time of the Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression in the

Middle East. The Burmese capital may be far from Cairo and Port Said, but here is what happened there....

The Soviet Olympic team was waiting for planes to Darwin and Melbourne. The team's chauffeur, an elderly and earnest man, decided to go out for a walk. From our hotel window we saw him cross the street and walk slowly along the pavement. A few moments later he disappeared from sight. Then, suddenly, we heard a shriek, and before we realised what was what and who was being chased by some two hundred Burmese, our chauffeur, deadly pale, burst into the hotel. "They wanted to kill me," he gasped.

The crowd attacked the beautiful hotel and smashed half its windows. It was a regular bedlam. Then we heard police sirens, and a little later order was restored.

When the chauffeur regained his breath, the members of the Soviet team asked him what had happened. Had he offended anyone? Perhaps he had been fresh to a woman?

"No, no. How can you think that?" was all the chauffeur replied.

The matter was soon cleared up. The Burmese had taken our chauffeur for an Englishman. Until recently, the white men they knew were either British or American, French or Dutch—and therefore hated. On learning of the events in the Middle East, filled with anger against those who had attacked their distant brethren, the Burmese took up their clubs, smashed windows in the British Embassy, and overturned and set fire to motor-cars belonging to Europeans. That was when our poor pale-face chauffeur found himself in the thick of it.

There was a surprise awaiting us in the evening. The same Burmese who had chased the chauffeur, came to the hotel. It was dusk, and in the light of shimmering lanterns we saw them carrying baskets of fruit, brightly coloured boxes and all sorts of sweetmeats. The emissaries of this peaceful delegation piled the gifts in the lobby, and said with guilty faces that they wished to convey three thou-



sand pardons to their white brother (just think: their white brother!) for frightening him.

One of them said something that will long remain in our memory.

"We live far from you," he said, "but we are troubled by what is happening in the world. We know how to distinguish people, and know that the colour of the skin is not everything. . . ."

The Burmese will not spare the enemy of his people as he spares the cobra, for he has learned from bitter experience that the colonialists are more terrible and venomous than any cobra.

### **"WHITE MAN'S BURDEN" MEANS EVIL DEEDS**

In his poem of sad fame, Kipling wrote:

*Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need,  
To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.*

The English bard was obviously at odds with history or, this is more probable, he deliberately distorted it. The "half-children" and "half-devils" had a lofty culture thousands of years old when the British colonialists came to "enlighten" them. Before her conquest by the British, Burma had more people who could read and write than Britain.

We recall an episode from Khrushchov's first visit to Burma in 1955. He was visiting the world-famous Shwedagon Pagoda, one of the finest specimens of Buddhist architecture. A Burmese diplomat pointed at its gilded spire, and said:

"When we were fighting for independence, we often said: 'The Shwedagon Pagoda was already standing when William the Conqueror landed in England. Our people had a lofty civilisation long before the English became a nation.' These words stimulated our people in their struggle."

"We should value and cherish our ancestors' heritage," Khrushchov observed.

"The Shwedagon Pagoda," continued the Burmese diplomat, "is illustrative not only of Burmese culture, but of the culture of all South-East Asia, that of India included. When India was a great state, there was no England as such. Today India is again becoming a great power...."

"That is how history evolves," Khrushchov remarked.

"Today we are changing history," one of the Burmese said.

"Yes, history is changing," the distinguished Soviet guest replied. "But it is a difficult and all-embracing process. People first fight for freedom and independence with gun in hand. Then, when freedom and independence have been won, the forms of struggle change. The people must develop their economy and culture and at the same time be prepared to uphold their independence. The Burmese people have had some bitter experiences in history and I think they will know how to stand up for themselves."

The tale of Burmese inferiority spread by the bards of the pound sterling was false throughout. But it was circulated with a definite purpose. Speaking on December 3, 1955, during his visit to the Shan State, Khrushchov said:

"The colonialists indoctrinated the oppressed peoples with the idea that colonial peoples are unfit to govern their countries. This lie was intensively inculcated into the minds of the peoples in order to hold them in submission. But are not the Burmese just as gifted as, say, the Russians or the British? Nations cannot be divided into capable and incapable. If they are given equal opportunities they will achieve success in their development."

That is now clear to everybody; even to Professor Frank



N. Trager, who lectures on international relations at New York University. In his travel notes on Burma, recently published in the *Far Eastern Survey*, he writes of "the genuine and not unexpected adaptability of the Burmese to the machine".

Yes, this adaptability is quite genuine. We can tell the following story. In the mid-19th century the British, probably inspired by their "white man's burden", tried to enrich their culture with the culture of the "inferior" people and stole a huge bell from the Shwedagon Pagoda. Yet the burden clearly proved too heavy for them. They managed to haul it to the river, but dropped it into the water when they tried to load it on a ship. All their attempts to recover it failed. Nor could the engineers expressly brought from Europe think of a way of raising it. The bell weighed more than forty-two tons! Yet a few years later the Burmese themselves lifted it out of the water, restored it and put it back in its place.

All we can add is that poets and professors should study the facts of history before making derogatory statements about the Burmese people.

And the facts are as follows.

Before the Christian era there existed in Central Burma the Tagaung Kingdom, which had a lofty culture, commerce and handicrafts. It owed its prosperity to its location along the great trade route linking China and Rome. "The history of Burma starts with Tagaung," say the Burmese.

Burma first emerged in the world arena as a united state early in the 11th century, after King Anawrata conquered the lands of his rival rulers. Its prosperity and power reached their pinnacle in the mid-16th century, when its authority extended to Thailand, Indo-China and parts of India.

Then came the period of Burma's decline. Endless feudal strife, dynastic wars and peasant risings sapped its power. After the first British, French and Dutch ships appeared

off the Burmese coast, this strife was fomented by the plunder-seeking Europeans. *Divide et impera* was their eleventh commandment, which they observed more than the other ten combined.

That was the time of which Karl Marx wrote:

“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.”

The British colonialists were better prepared for their “civilising” mission than the others. They seized India and, outdistancing their French rivals, invaded Burma. This started the first Anglo-Burmese war. The colonialists expected a rapid and easy victory, but their expectations fell through.

The Burmese showed wonders of heroism in defending their country against the invader. Armed with spears and daggers, and all too often with nothing but bamboo sticks, they put up a stubborn resistance. The forces under Bandula, Burma’s outstanding general and national hero, put the “proud Albions” to flight in the battles of Chittagong and Rangoon. It was only after they received strong reinforcements from India and Britain that the East India Company troops succeeded in crushing the resistance of Bandula’s army. Bandula himself died a hero’s death in the battle of Danubyu. The Burmese revere his memory. His name has been given to the main square and the main street in Rangoon. The latter was formerly called Dalhousie Street in honour—if the word may be applied to him—of one of the British governors-general.

Threatened by British guns, Burma was forced to sign the so-called Treaty of Yandabo, a typical specimen of colonialist unscrupulousness, which carved up the country and compelled the people to pay an exorbitant contribution.



The news of the predatory invasion of Burma by the British colonialists reached Russia too. Progressive Russian intellectuals sided with the heroic Burmese people in their righteous fight against the alien invader. The journal *Rus-sky Invalid* carried an article saying the Burmese were "courageous, industrious, cheerful, obliging, possessed of a great presence of mind, avid for knowledge and honest in dealing with foreigners". The author said the Burmese loved music and the theatre. Blaming Britain for the war, he wrote: "The British could not bear to see their neighbours, the Burmese, independent, and commercial rivalry soon developed into animosity."

The British lion was not satisfied with bits, however dainty. It wanted to swallow its prey lock, stock and barrel. British diplomats did not take the trouble to look for a pretext to unleash hostilities, and the second Anglo-Burmese war broke out in 1852. This time too the forces were very unequal. Flint-guns and swords of soft iron were no match for the field guns and steel bayonets of the invaders. The decrepit feudal system, already in an advanced stage of disintegration, could not stand up to the young capitalist despoiler.

A year after the war broke out King Mindon was forced to capitulate. The treaty he signed abandoned to the British all Lower Burma, the country's granary, the storehouse of her "white gold"—rice. But appetite comes with eating, and by signing the treaty the British were merely taking time out to digest what they had devoured. "The so-called peace concluded with Burma," wrote K. Marx and F. Engels, "announced with a proclamation of the Governor-General of India, dated June 30, 1853, and upon which the Queen is made to congratulate Parliament, is nothing but a simple truce ... England ... has been driven out of the ethnographical, geographical and political circumscription of her Indian dominions, and the Celestial Empire itself no longer forms any natural barrier to her conquering force."

Here is what the eminent Russian orientalist, M. Vennyukov, wrote of the colonialists' growing appetite: "Burma has twice been defeated by England (1825 and 1853) and has been reduced to less than half. But she is still not entirely insignificant, and this makes the British persist in their desire to end her independence as quickly as possible."

The opening of the Suez Canal beyond which, General Kitchener cynically declared, there was no such thing as the Ten Commandments, increased Britain's ambitions in Burma. Seizing upon an insignificant pretext, the British Admiralty ordered the warships lying at anchor in Rangoon to cruise up the Irrawaddy and occupy Mandalay, then the Burmese capital.

Here is how Kipling described the "cruise" in his *Mandalay*:

*Ship me somewheres East of Suez, where the best is  
like the worst,  
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man  
can raise a thirst;  
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I  
would be—  
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea;  
On the road to Mandalay,  
Where the old Flotilla lay,  
With our sick beneath the awnings, when we went to  
Mandalay!  
O the road to Mandalay,  
Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China  
'crost the Bay!*

The third Anglo-Burmese war lasted a little over ten days. On January 1, 1886, Burma disappeared from the map of the world as an independent state. She was officially made part of Britain's dominions in India.



The rapid collapse of the Burmese kingdom was presaged by its drawn out agony. Mandalay did not fall because the British troops were brave, but because the feudals ruling it were unable to rally the people they oppressed to defend the capital.

For centuries people bowed their heads in fear as they passed the palace of their despotic rulers. They recalled King Mindon burying fifty-two people alive on the site of his palace on the advice of the priests, who said their "spirits" would guard the royal abode. The population loathed and feared Mindon's son, King Thibaw, the last of the Burmese monarchs, who arranged mass executions in the palace to the strains of music. Small wonder that the kingdom of Mandalay with its complicated court hierarchy, its feudal ceremonies and laws collapsed like a house of cards.

The royal forces resisted no more than a few days. But it was years before the colonialists succeeded in putting down the people's armed resistance and creating a semblance of law and order in the country. The kings surrendered to them, but the people did not. British guns destroyed fortress walls, but not the courage of patriots who knew what welcome to accord the uninvited guests.

"The whole country rose, from Bhamo to Minhla, from the Shan Plateau to the Chin Mountains," wrote H. Fielding, a British officer, in his memoirs. "All Upper Burma was in a passion of insurrection, a very fury of rebellion against the usurping foreigners. Our authority was confined to the range of our guns. Our forts were attacked, our convoys ambushed, our steamers fired into on the rivers. There was no safety for an Englishman . . . save within the line of our troops, and it was soon felt that these troops were far too few to cope with the danger. To overthrow King Thibaw was easy, to subdue the people a very different thing."

A grim period of slavery, violence and rapine followed in Burma's history. "The process of the plunder of natives

by the European countries is particularly vividly manifested in the description of the *division* of Farther India (Siam with British Burma from the west and French Indo-China from the east)," Lenin stressed in his *Notebooks on Imperialism*.

The history of those years was one of outright blood-curdling colonial plunder.

Blood. . . .

"If money, according to Augier," wrote Marx, "'comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek', capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." Blood tinted the waters of the Irrawaddy and the white rhododendrons, the blessed soil of Burma, the country of gold and laughter—the pure gold of its pagodas, the white gold of her rice, the ringing gold of her laughter. But gold disappeared in the safes of the City moneybags, rice in ships' holds, and laughter vanished from Burmese eyes.

Plunder. . . .

Minayev, Russian scientist and traveller, who visited Burma shortly after her seizure by the British, described the atrocities of the marauders as follows: "The conquerors ran wild: they grabbed everything they could lay their hands on. And there was plenty they could lay their hands on! Gold and rubies, magnificence and finery everywhere. The soldiers and officers all rushed to the palace to reconnoitre: they were laying the foundation stones of the majestic edifice called 'Pax Britannica'. They plundered and searched for hidden treasures."

But those were the small fry, the colonialist pickpockets. In their wake came the big-time plunderers, pastmasters of wholesale robbery and rapine. "The guns are booming," Minayev wrote in his diary, "Lord Dufferin is leaving for Madras. The last act of the Burmese tragedy is over. Of the tragedy whose first scene was played in Rangoon when the British hucksters shrieked wildly: 'Let's pocket Burma!'"



Burmese oil was divided by the Burma Oil Company, Indo-Burma Petroleum Company and British Burma Petroleum Company. Tungsten and tin were cornered by the Burma Corporation and the Anglo-Burmese Tin Company. The great Irrawaddy, the blood artery of Burma, was forced to serve the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and the Burmese forests were taken over by the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, Steel Brothers Company and three lesser British timber firms. The president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Rangoon was the uncrowned king of Burma. The colonialists seized the most fertile of the rice land.

The nightmare of colonial slavery and inhuman exploitation lasted nearly a century. The white civilisers certainly knew how to bear their "burden". When Colonel MacCormick of the British army raped a little girl in Rangoon, the British judges acquitted him, apparently believing he had honestly borne his burden. The monstrous verdict evoked indignation throughout India, of which Burma was then considered a province. That was in 1912. Commenting on it, Lenin wrote: "This incident shows more eloquently than any arguments why the revolution in this country of more than 300,000,000 people is developing so rapidly."

To kill millions of people, sack their homes, burn villages together with the old folks, the women, and children, was all part of the great civilising mission undertaken in the name of Christ. The ladies of Paris, London and the Hague gratefully accepted the beautiful emeralds, corals and pearls from their returning colonial "knights", not caring that every little gem represented mutilated and murdered people.

In the East, in the last few centuries, time seemed to pass slower than in Europe. But it did not stop. Only those incapable of understanding the natural development of history could have been deceived on that score. The clock of history is now being set right. The vigorous Asian na-

tions are resolutely moving the hands of the clock to the precise hour. These nations have a vast store of energy and culture. And when we hear racists say "civilised Europeans" and "savage Asiatics", we feel like taking these hypocrites by the scruff of their necks and shouting:

The "white man's burden" means evil deeds!

### THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY

One day King Mindon, who moved his capital to Mandalay after the fall of Rangoon, sent an emissary to Calcutta, instructing him to talk the British Governor-General of India into returning Rangoon to Burma.

The Governor-General took the emissary to the window and, pointing to the sky, said:

"The Union Jack will wave over Lower Burma as long as the sun shines...."

In January 1948 the six-star flag of independent Burma was unfurled over Government House in Rangoon. The Union Jack was lowered once and for all.

These two events were a century apart, a century of the Burmese people's valiant struggle for freedom and national independence.

The Burmese made it hot for the colonialists. The Dacoits—guerillas—struck terror into the hearts of the British authorities. A Russian traveller, who visited the country in the early 1890s, wrote: "The British call them robbers, but in reality they are the defenders of their country, waging a guerilla war against the British. Unless the British suppress these people's forces ... they cannot hope for peace in the area."

But can a people fighting for a just cause be suppressed? No terror can daunt or break the fighters for freedom. "The authorities catch and shoot several Dacoits every day," Minayev wrote in his diary. "Their bodies are paraded in the streets to intimidate the population. But the



people are not impressed by the show, and the Dacoits go to their death smiling and smoking cigars."

The national-liberation movement in Burma gained momentum early in the 20th century. In 1906 progressive intellectuals set up a political organisation called the Young Men's Buddhist Association. The orange robes worn by the monks often proved a convenient disguise.

The Great October Socialist Revolution set off a chain reaction, activating the national-liberation movement in China and India, and in Burma. The shot fired by the cruiser *Aurora* on the Neva, which sparked off the Revolution, echoed on the banks of the Irrawaddy.

"To the peoples of Asia, suffering . . . under the oppressive colonial yoke, the success of the Revolution had a catalytic effect on a long dormant will to be free," U Nu wrote. "It kindled hope where none hitherto existed, and where hope already existed the October Revolution brought new strength and inspiration to the freedom movement. . . . As in other Asian countries, in Burma also the October Revolution of Russia gave a strong impetus to our fight for freedom and encouragement to our aspirations to apply the ideals of social justice, equality and liberty in our social organisation."

During his visit to Leningrad in 1955, U Nu declared that the Burmese who had fought against colonial oppression regarded Lenin as a great leader and always drew inspiration from his lofty ideas.

In an editorial headed "Welcome to Friends", published during Khrushchov's first visit in 1955, the *New Times of Burma* wrote: "Pressed and exploited by the Western colonialists for over a century, the Burmese and other Asian leaders have often turned their eyes to Soviet Russia. Even today, when the Western masters have changed their ways of dealing with the Asians, many questions are being asked if such a change could be possible if Soviet Russia were not standing at the next corner, ready and willing to offer an alternative choice. Even today, when the ad-

vance of science has outdistanced human objects and reasons, it is to the benefit of the ex-colonies and semi-colonial peoples that Soviet Russia is on the next road watching the West.... No one can therefore deny that Soviet Russia had been directly and indirectly instrumental in helping the freedom of many millions of Asians, including the Burmese people."

\* \* \*

Though separated from Russia by thousands of kilometres, by towering mountains and deep seas, the Burmese always had a deep respect for the Russian people. In 1885, reporting on his meeting with Burmese representatives in Paris, the Russian Ambassador to France said the talk had convinced him "how very much higher than the British we are held in esteem by these people". The Ambassador was told that the interest of the Burmese in Russia was growing and that they even subscribed to a Russian newspaper.

Of particular interest are the notes of P. I. Pashino, a Russian traveller and scholar closely associated with Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, the Russian 19th-century revolutionary democrats. In his *Notes on the Present Situation in Burma*, written on his return from that country, he said: "The fact that strikes every unprejudiced traveller most is that Russia, powerful in the eyes of Europe, holds some incredible fascination for the whole of Asia. I do not know why and since when most of the Asian nations believe they will be liberated from alien rule by Russia.... Burmese and Hindu discontent with the British, with their political system of colonial administration and commercial Jesuitism, is quite natural in my opinion, but because of it the hopes pinned on Russia have assumed colossal scope."

Russo-Burmese relations date back to the 15th century and are associated with the name of the Russian merchant, Afanasy Nikitin. In his celebrated *Voyage Beyond Three*



Seas we come across a description of the Pegu area, then part of the Mon Kingdom. Somewhat later, in the 16th century, Armenian merchants set up a colony in the Indian town of Agra. They built up a brisk trade with Burma. It flourished, and in 1612 many of them moved on to Rangoon.

Later, when the British colonialists threatened to absorb all Burma, her rulers turned their gazes upon Russia, in whom the more far-sighted Burmese politicians saw an ally. Steps were taken to establish close relations with Russia. In 1874 the Burmese Minister to Persia sought permission to come to St. Petersburg for negotiations. According to the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, his purpose was to ask Russia for "assistance and protection against the British invaders, who had already occupied a big part of Burma and were preparing to push the Burmese to the China border".

In May 1875, acting on instructions from his sovereign, the Burmese Foreign Minister wrote to his Russian colleague: "I warmly wish your country prosperity and I believe that the day is not distant when our nations' disposition to friendship will acquire a concrete character and lead to the establishment of friendly and mutually advantageous relations."

Russia's tsarist government turned a deaf ear to these appeals. But Russian public opinion and the progressive Russians of the time followed the developments in remote Burma with great interest. They sympathised deeply with the Burmese people and protested against the violence of the British colonialists. The great Russian chemist, D. I. Mendeleev, time and again expressed sympathy with the Burmese people's national-liberation struggle. While in Paris for a scientific congress, he had talks with Burmese diplomats and later tried to prevail with the tsarist government that it was necessary to establish friendly relations with Burma.

\* \* \*

After the First World War a number of Burmese patriotic organisations merged to form the General Council of Buddhist Associations. Its leadership organised mass civil disobedience campaigns and boycotts of foreign goods. Anti-colonial and anti-imperialist meetings swept the country. Foment was rife among the youth.

The scale of the national-liberation movement compelled the British authorities to manoeuvre. In 1923 they introduced the so-called "diarchy". The functions of government were divided into functions pertaining to the central authorities, that is, the British, and those of the local authorities. But the latter, too, were subdivided into "reserved subjects" withdrawn from the competence of the ministers, and "transferred subjects" dealt with by the ministers. The former included all affairs of the state, the latter what Lenin had ironically called "tinning washstands", or secondary matters. As J. S. Furnivall, a prominent Burma expert, notes, these and the subsequent constitutional reforms, though democratic in appearance, "were in practice an education in political corruption".

For the Burmans, however, Burma's affairs were by no means "reserved subjects" but a matter of the nation's life and death. Playing at reforms may have suited the venal politicians and the compradore bourgeoisie. It certainly did not suit the people. The national-liberation movement steadily expanded.

Among the many outstanding Burmese resistance fighters were the monk U Ottama and U Wizara. In 1929 U Wizara was arrested and jailed by the British. He declared a hunger strike and refused food for 156 days, dying of extreme emaciation. After liberation, the Burmese erected a monument to him in Rangoon.

The exploitation of the Burmese seemed to have reached a limit. Then came the world economic crisis. The City tycoons tried to recoup their losses at the expense of their overseas possessions. In an effort to preserve their profits from the effects of the crisis, the Bullinger Pool—a monop-



oly of British rice merchants—lowered the purchase price of Burmese rice to a mere third, robbing and ruining the peasants without a trace of compunction.

This exhausted the patience of the Burmese peasants. Secret societies sprang up in the countryside. They killed the colonialist-appointed village headmen and the usurers who bought up peasant land for next to nothing, and called on their fellow-villagers to refuse paying taxes, and debts to the usurers.

An uprising broke out at the end of 1930. Its leaders declared war on Britain. The insurgents swore to dedicate their lives to the nation and to do everything to liberate it from the government imposed from without. The insurrection was led by the galons, so called after a mythical bird which defeated the dragon. Its leader, Saya San, called on the Burmese galons to defeat the British dragon.

The rising spread like a prairie fire, from village to village and province to province. The insurgents formed an army which the people called the Tiger Army. And, indeed, Saya San and his followers, armed mainly with swords and spears, fought like tigers. They were short of fire-arms; those they had were captured from the enemy.

But the dragon emerged victorious once again. Though with utmost difficulty, a British punitive expedition suppressed the insurrection. Saya San and eleven of his closest associates were captured and executed.

"I am not afraid to die," he told his executioners in court. "I know that if I was arrested I would be sentenced to death sooner or later. But I have done my duty and I hope my revolutionary followers will fight on to victory."

Those were prophetic words. The colonialist policy was misfiring more and more. The people's national-liberation movement grew in scope and scale. The first mass political party, Do Bama Asiayon (Burma for the Burmese), was founded in Rangoon at the time. The party became known as the Party of Thakins. Its members called themselves

thakins, that is, masters, and put the word thakin before their names. This had a symbolic meaning. Theretofore, the title "thakin" was used only in addressing the British. By calling themselves thakins the members of the Do Bama Asiayon emphasised that they, the Burmese, and not the British, were the masters of Burma, that the Burmese were not slaves but free men. The party's slogan was: "Burma is our country, Burma's written language is our written language, so let us love our country, cherish our written language and respect our tongue."

Influenced by the Do Bama Asiayon, Burmese students read Rousseau and Garibaldi and got to know Marx's *Capital*. The Red Dragon Book Club, founded in 1937, propagated progressive ideas, Marxist included. The party's ideological head was Thakin Kodaw Hmaing; its leaders were Aung San, who became Burma's national hero, U Nu, the future Prime Minister, and Thakin Than Tun, who later founded the Communist Party of Burma.

It was they who led the "university boycott" in 1936. Protesting against the anti-democratic educational system, Burmese students refused to attend lectures and set up a camp at the Shwedagon Pagoda, the traditional site of political demonstrations. The strike lasted three months. The Thakin anthem *Do Bama*, which later became the national anthem of independent Burma, was written in those memorable days.

This was the anthem sung by the workers of the Central Burma oilfields as they started on their "hunger march" from Yenangyaung to Rangoon. The fields were operated by the Burma Oil Company, which exploited the workers brutally. The Thakin Party prepared a report describing the conditions in which the oilmen worked and lived and exposing all the underhand dealings of the British concern. Circulated among workers, it caused an outburst of indignation. The 500-kilometre "hunger march" lasted a whole year, from January 1938 to January 1939. Four thousand oil workers bearing red banners with a



sickle and hammer and the tri-colour Do Bama flags, entered Rangoon in serried columns. The British authorities resorted to ruthless measures to suppress the popular movement for freedom and democracy.

Some of the Do Bama Asiayon leaders, U Nu among them, were put behind bars. Others, including Aung San, emigrated first to Japan and then to Thailand. There they formed the Burma Independence Army, which returned home after the outbreak of the Pacific war, when Japanese troops were pressing the British.

The situation was a difficult one. A choice had to be made. The Japanese were aggressors. They were seizing one Asian country after another. But the British, the French and the Dutch, whom the Japanese were fighting, were even worse in the eyes of the Burmese—and in the eyes of the Indonesians, the Vietnamese and all the other colonial nations whom they had oppressed, tormented and plundered for centuries. These nations refused to help Britain, France and the Netherlands in their war against the Japanese aggressors.

But, then, what should their attitude be to the Japanese, who were advancing so rapidly, occupying the lands abandoned by the West-European colonialists? Like certain other East and South-East Asian nations, the Burmese were not sure at first what they should do.

As U Nu writes in *Burma Under the Japanese*, "before the war so many Burmans were so ready to follow the seductive piping of the Japanese without realising at all in what direction it was leading us. And it led us to the Japanese occupation and to the oppression that we suffered under Japanese rule". Another prominent Burmese leader, U Ba Swe, later also admitted that "because of our mistaken faith in the Japanese fascists, the entire country suffered an ordeal of oppression".

Before going on with our story, we should like to say that the lesson proved instructive. "Beware of Pied Pipers!" U Nu said, referring to the experience with the Jap-

anese, and quoted the wise Burmese adage that "foolish children listen to their aunt rather than their mother". After the war, when they heard SEATO's "pipe", the Burmese recalled their bitter experiences and listened to their mother country, and not to the exhortations of the evil aunt from across the Pacific.

The hopes reposed in the Japanese were soon dissipated. U Nu tells about it in his book. Here is how he describes the welcome given to the Japanese occupation forces.

Boys and girls, old men and women met the Japanese with bananas and melons and all kinds of fruit. Some had bowls of rice on their heads. Two elderly women distributed sprigs of thabyeban (eugenia) to everyone. Old ladies, with tears streaming down their faces, were chanting the ancient song:

*Tend the thabyeban with cool water,  
The garland of victory, tend it with cool water.*

"All were exulting in the thought that Burma would be free. This could readily be understood. The whole air was breathing rumours. 'The Japanese are our great friends.... The Japanese will die for Burma's freedom.... A Burman prince is coming as a leader in the Japanese army....' " The inhabitants turned out to welcome the Japanese.

"We met them again in the afternoon about four o'clock," U Nu continues. "They were no longer marching in a procession but limping along in clumps of three or four. Their faces were no longer joyful and exultant as in the morning, and they seemed quite shy of facing the people who had stayed at home. When they came up to us we asked what had happened. One of them replied in a surly tone, 'Don't talk about it. We expected the Japanese commander to be very thankful for our bowls of rice, but all he did was to take his hand out of his trouser pocket and give us a hard slap in the face.' "



Yes, it did not take the Japanese long to turn the garlands made by the Burmese to mark the victory over the British into hangmen's nooses. The Burma Independence Army was disbanded, the Provisional People's Government bodies were dissolved. True, the Japanese occupation authorities allowed a Burmese Government to function, but it actually had no rights. What the Burmese Ministers had to go through under the Japanese is vividly and bitterly described by U Nu, then Foreign Minister. "If the man who dreamed that he was a king happened to come across one of our good friends the Japanese, he would suddenly wake up to find 'Made in Japan' printed on his forehead." One day the Japanese Ambassador insulted U Nu. "On reflection, I recognised that he had guns to back him and I had nothing better than a cultivator's knife."

The Japanese military police ran wild. They grabbed patriots and the discontented and threw them in jail. The occupation forces treated people worse than animals. More than 100,000 died from diseases and inhuman treatment when building the Thailand-Burma railway in the jungle.

The people of Burma had not fought the British colonialists to fall under the yoke of the Japanese samurai. Resistance to the occupation authorities kept mounting. The patriotic forces led by Aung San were preparing for a showdown.

The growth of the anti-Japanese movement and military reverses forced the Japanese imperialists formally to proclaim Burma independent in August 1943. Article I of the new Constitution said "Burma shall be a fully independent and sovereign state". But Article II included Burma in the so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, that is, proclaimed her a Japanese colony. The notorious "co-prosperity" spelled finis to Burma's independence. Characteristically, when Dr. Ba Maw, the head of state, decided to move into Government House, General Isamura refused to vacate it. There was nothing for Ba Maw to do but ac-

cept the situation. Such was Burma's "independence" at the time.

The freedom-loving Burmese people stepped up their struggle for liberation. In August 1944 the Communist Party, the People's Revolutionary Party (future Socialists), Aung San's Burma Independence Army, youth societies and certain national minority organisations set up the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. The following March its armed forces rose against the occupation troops. The Allied counter-offensive in the Pacific contributed to the success of the rising. On May 1, 1945, the revolutionary forces and armed peasants drove the Japanese out of Rangoon. Shortly afterwards, Japan capitulated.

The long-awaited freedom had come, it seemed. But instead of granting Burma the independence they had promised it, the British colonialists resumed their old song about the "white man's burden". The monopolies were dead set against abandoning the Burmese gold mine and the militarists against giving up their strategic bases.

The colonialists imposed the so-called Kandy Agreement on Burma, took advantage of it to disband the non-government armed forces which had fought the Japanese, arrested democrats and released reactionaries. On his return to Rangoon, British Governor-General Dorman-Smith formed a new colonial administration.

It looked as though things were back to what they were. But this was a superficial and deceptive impression. The wheel of history was turning faster after the far-reaching changes wrought by the defeat of German fascism and Japanese militarism. There emerged the world socialist system. The crisis of colonialism developed rapidly.

The British colonialists began to manoeuvre. They tried the dodge of offering Burma dominion status. But Aung San, the League president, turned it down. The Burmans, he told London proudly, want the "restoration of Burmese Burma, not British Burma".

The statement could not be clearer. Even the British



ruling element grasped it. Speaking in the Commons late in December 1946, Labour Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee announced that Britain was prepared to recognise Burma's right to independence within or outside the British Empire. "We do not desire," he said, trying to make a virtue of necessity, "to retain within the Commonwealth and Empire any unwilling peoples." Statements of this sort remind one of the fable about the fox and the sour grapes.

A Burmese delegation headed by Aung San arrived in London shortly after Attlee's declaration. The colonialists tried to use the London round-table conference to gain time. Under the terms of the Aung San-Attlee Agreement, Britain undertook to respect Burma's desire to achieve early independence within or without the Commonwealth and agreed to the convocation of a constituent assembly. But while signing the agreement with one hand, the colonialists were sowing seeds of discord in Burma with the other. The British imperialists' idea was to carve up the country by making the most of the separatist sentiments prevailing among certain national minorities, and by fomenting discontent over the difficult living conditions.

In his *Burma Under the Japanese* U Nu tells a parable about two muzzled oxen. "While the cattle are treading out the grain the cultivator muzzles them lest they should eat it. They can see the grain but cannot eat it because they are muzzled. Then in due course the cultivator gathers up the grain in his barn and turns the cattle loose. And all they do is to begin goring one another. In Burma the soil is so rich that for all the sixteen millions of Karens, Chins, Kachins, Shans, Taungthus and Burmese there is more than enough to eat and more than enough to wear. But, like the oxen, the Burmese have been muzzled and so also have the Karens, Shans, Chins, Taungthus and so on; they could see a large fat ham, but their bellies remained empty; they hadn't enough to eat, or to wear or anything. And when they were set free they went for one another like fighting cocks."

The cocks fought and the senile British lion egged them on. Conservative M.P.s demanded Burma's division into small national "self-governing" states.

But you cannot win time when it is working against you. You cannot go on deluding nations by pitting them against each other. The colonialists put their stakes on the *divide et impera* principle, and lost. The Anti-Fascist League headed by Aung San and national minority leaders met in Panglong and ironed out their differences.

It is not for nothing that February 12—the day the Panglong Agreement was signed—has entered the Burmese political calendar as Unity Day. At that time all the social sections of the population were united for the struggle against the common enemy; the danger that the colonialists would restore their sway was obvious to all. The League represented the people's aspirations. It had the support of the people; its prestige grew. Therein lay the secret of its successful struggle against the colonialists. Later, when Burma had achieved political independence, internal class contradictions became increasingly apparent, causing a realignment of the political forces. We shall come back to this in greater detail.

The long-awaited session of the Burmese Constituent Assembly opened on June 9, 1947. It unanimously adopted the Directive on Independence, which provided for the full transfer of authority from the British Crown to Burma. But the best of directives are worth very little if they remain on paper. The Burmese patriotic forces adopted an important decision, formulated by Aung San as follows: "If the transfer is not effected peacefully, through negotiations, we shall resort to other means."

The colonialists were compelled to capitulate. On December 10, 1947, the British Parliament endorsed the Constitution of the Union of Burma and adopted the Burma Independence Act. The time came for the colonialists to "go" from Mandalay, and they did that, though not as playfully as the "flyin'-fishes". "Mandalay" is the Burmese for



“cluster of precious stones”. Thenceforth this cluster was out of the British lion’s grasp.

The Burmese have a beautiful legend about the famous Maha Ganda bell in the Shwedagon Pagoda. The bell, says the legend, possesses miraculous powers. If rung three times after a prayer, it will fulfil the most cherished wishes. Long did the Maha Ganda boom over the bowed heads of the unfortunates who prayed to Buddha for deliverance. But it was neither the bell nor Buddha that gave Burma freedom. It was the people who did it. And it was the people who hoisted the flag of independence embodying the history of its birth.

Burma’s flag is red with a blue square in the upper left corner. In the centre of the square is a big five-pointed white star surrounded by five smaller white stars. The red field and the big star are the flag of the Burmese Anti-Fascist Resistance Movement. The five smaller stars symbolise the alliance of Burmans, Karens, Shans, Kachins and Chins—the principal nationalities in the Union. The stars on the flag are the symbol of progress, the white colour is the symbol of purity and truth, the blue represents love of peace, and the red symbolises courage, determination and unity, and serves as a reminder of the blood shed by the Burmese in the struggle for liberation.

The flag was first hoisted at 4.20 a.m. on January 4, 1948, in Rangoon. This time was chosen on the advice of astrologers, who named it as the happiest moment for the proclamation of Burma’s independence. The day became national day. The diplomats of some countries are said to have shivered in the early morning cold. But that was not the astrologers’ fault. The diplomats in question had good reason to shiver.

Since then Burmese Independence Day celebrations start at the early hour of 4.20 a.m. This naturally creates many inconveniences. But they are incomparable to the “inconveniences” caused the colonialists by the “untimely” appearance of the free and independent state of Burma.

There is something symbolic about the fact that Burmese Independence Day celebrations start so early. All through their age-old history the Burmese had ardently and intensely yearned for the dawn.

### THE RING OF SLAVERY AND THE HELPING HAND

In North-East Burma there is a little state called Mong Pai, inhabited by the Padaung tribe. Padaung means long-necked. The tribe owes its name to its women, whose necks are often thirty to forty centimetres long.

Padaung girls are not born with long necks. Their necks are made long with the aid of copper rings. The first ring, about ten centimetres wide, is placed round a girl's neck when she is five years old, the last—fourth—when she is eleven. The wider the last ring is, the richer and more beautiful the girl, from the Padaung point of view.

If a woman is unfaithful to her husband, he can ask the elder to take all the rings off. That is tantamount to a death sentence, for the atrophied neck muscles are incapable of supporting the artificially lengthened vertebrae, and the latter break.

We mentioned the Padaung tribe and its strange custom deliberately. When the Burmese smashed the fetters of colonialism and took the fate of the country into their own hands, those who had placed rings of slavery round Burma's neck hoped its vertebrae, deformed by a century of colonial oppression, would break and Burma would again obediently shove her neck into a yoke. The *Times* of London, for example, wrote about the establishment of the Union of Burma that it was "the first of the countries within the Commonwealth to launch upon uncharted waters of formal independence", while the *Manchester Guardian* compared Burma to the "prodigal son" who would sooner or later return to the "paternal fold".



It was a devilish hope, and not altogether groundless. The hundred years of British rule had kept Burma back. What was more, when the colonialists saw they would have to leave, they set out to rob it systematically, after the principle of Louis XV, "*Après moi le déluge!*"

In *This Is Our World*, the reactionary American journalist, Louis Fischer, writes: "Oriental Burma, like non-Oriental Ceylon, is Buddhist and happy. Burma has no ulcers. Are the Burmese happy because they are Buddhists or did they adopt Buddhism because they were happy? Who knows? Economics is a factor. Cares are few. The climate reduces clothing requirements to a minimum. Food is plentiful. (In India it was scarce for centuries.) Bananas seem to grow in every backyard, and rice is available in excess."

No, the Burman's world is not as Mr. Fischer describes it. Only a blind man, or one who wears dollars by way of blinkers, can say Burma has no ulcers.

The century of colonialism left deep ulcers on Burma's body. A country which once had a higher percentage of literacy than Britain, Burma had a mere 75 secondary, 50 middle and less than 1,500 primary schools in 1946. She did not have a single higher or secondary technical school, and not a single research institute. Was this not an ulcer?

Half the population has once suffered, or now suffers from malaria. The T.B. incidence is very high. Almost one-quarter of the urban population had V.D. When the colonialists left there were about 10,000 lepers. Doctors numbered a mere 2,000. The average life span was 30 years. Was this not an ulcer?

Louis Fischer writes that there is no land problem in Burma. But how do you explain the fact, Mr. Fischer, that less than half the arable land was tilled during the rule of the British? And who turned Burma into a one-crop country—a country cultivating nothing but rice—and made her import such foodstuffs as butter, pepper and onions? Yes, in the colonial days the tillers did recover vast tracts of jungle and swampland that seethed with poisonous

snakes and yellow-fever mosquitoes. And the reclaimed land yielded millions of tons of rice and hundreds of millions of kyats\*. But to whom? To the monopolists, the landowners and the usurers. Was this not an ulcer?

And do you know what the Second World War cost Burma, whom Britain and Japan regarded as small change in their game? All the more or less important industrial enterprises and transport facilities were destroyed or, as J. Andrus, the American Burma expert, writes, completely demolished in keeping with the so-called scorched-earth policy of the British. The oilfields were turned into wasteland, the mines were flooded, locomotives, ships and harbour facilities in Rangoon destroyed, and the rice mills razed. According to official estimates, the country suffered material damage amounting to 23,700 million kyats (about £1,780 million). Of the 7,800,000 hectares of arable land in 1946-1947, between 2,000,000 and 2,400,000 hectares were not tilled. As a result the agricultural output dropped to about half the pre-war level. Industrial output declined still more; mining, for instance, dropped to 4 per cent of pre-war. Was this not an ulcer?!

Mr. Fischer exults about the well-being of the Burmans who—praise be to the sun!—can go around barefoot and naked, and feel satisfied at the mere sight of bananas. Yet the income of such “well-to-do” Burmans in the colonialist days amounted to only 75 kyats, or about £5 12s. a year, while the average income of an Englishman amounted to £108, or twenty times as much. Was this not an ulcer?

When leaving Burma, the British colonialists did everything they could to pave the way back to her. They proved far more ingenious than Kipling, who wrote ruefully:

*But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,  
An' there ain't no buses runnin' from the Bank to  
Mandalay.*

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\* Kyat is the Burmese monetary unit.—Authors.



But where no bus could go, where no dreadnought could pass, the pound sterling could find a way. And that was just what the colonialists banked on. It was not for nothing that the Attlee-U Nu treaty of October 1947, officially recognising the Union of Burma as a "fully independent, sovereign state", obliged the Burmese Government to guarantee the interests of the British monopolies, to pay an "equitable compensation" in the event of nationalisation of alien property, and to forbid outright confiscation. No wonder foreign capital still has a powerful grasp on Burma's economy. No wonder her foreign trade is still unable to break out of the clutches of the foreign monopolies. One look at the thick, fortress-like walls of the British banks and corporations in downtown Rangoon, from Bogyoke Street to Strand Road, will show that this is so.

Lastly—and this is most important—Burma has no well-developed industry of her own and too few scientists and technicians equipped with modern know-how and experience. In short, she has yet to build the edifice of her economic independence, and without that edifice political freedom is nothing but a castle in the air.

All that is a legacy of colonialism. *Business Week* bluntly wrote: "Colonialism left Burma a geographical monstrosity—a nation with no industry, with diverse and non-integrated racial groups".

The *Business Week* article was titled "New Nations Discover Independence Is Hard". Yes, it is easier to achieve independence than to uphold it. Perhaps the bosses of the U.S. monopoly mouthpiece would like to help Burma? Particularly since their journal emphasised that "how to help Nu is Washington's problem".

The truth is, however, that Washington is interested in other matters. The American ruling elements were overjoyed when the British colonialists were driven out of Burma, and lost no time in raising a clamour about the "vacuum" this had created. "The newly independent nations," said the same *Business Week*, "will continue to

struggle for their right of self-determination. But they cannot fill the 'vacuum' left by the withdrawal of their colonial masters immediately. That means that the West, and particularly the U.S. (so that is what it was driving at—*Authors*), must find a way to prevent communism, which has particular appeal to underdeveloped countries from filling the void."

What we have here is a full collection of the primitive and vile propaganda clichés with "Made in U.S.A." labels—"vacuum of strength", "communist menace", "native inferiority", and, to round it all up, the American Prince Charming coming to the rescue of the Burmese Princess shut up in the vacuum.

The only truth in all these arguments is that Uncle Sam is ready to kick John Bull out, so the latter should not mar the appearance of the Burmese "vacuum". The rest is apple sauce. Here is what the *Business Week* says: "An index of its resources shows why an independent non-communist Burma is so important to U.S. foreign policy in Asia. Even today, with only one-third of the arable land under cultivation, Burma still is Asia's largest rice exporter. Asia—particularly Communist China—needs Burma's rice."

To put it plainly, the American imperialists would like to kill two birds with one stone—undermine the Burmese rice trade and starve the Asian countries whose regimes are not to Wall Street's liking.

Rice, incidentally, is only one of the stakes in the big game of the U.S. monopolies in Burma. Immediately after the war the United States sold Burma a profusion of obsolete and unwanted war materiel and used the money it obtained from this profitable deal to reinforce its propaganda and intelligence machine in that country. After this it tried to force Burma to accept its "aid" under the "economic and technical co-operation programme". That was in 1950. That same year the United States organised a Kuomintang intervention in North-East Burma. The Chiang



Kai-shek forces under General Li Mi, driven out of Yunnan Province, were reinforced with troops airlifted via Thailand by the Americans from Taiwan and equipped with the latest American arms. There were 22 American instructors at Mong Hsat, where the bandit forces set up their headquarters. Little wonder, then, that Burma refused to sign a "mutual security" agreement with the United States and rejected its offer of "technical assistance".

The American monopolies were quick to retaliate. They began to seize Burma's traditional export markets by dumping rice in South-East Asia. That was one of the main reasons for the failure of the Pyedawtha (State Prosperity) Plan of the Burmese Government. The rice prices dropped sharply. Burma was left with large rice surpluses, which unbalanced her budget, for rice sales gave the country more than a third of its budget revenue.

Burma was on the brink of disaster. But she had true friends. These true friends—the Soviet Union and other socialist countries—came to her assistance. "We shall always remember," U Nu told Parliament on September 27, 1957, "that it was the Soviet Union which, in the difficult days of 1954 and 1955, when we were unable to find buyers for our rice, came to our assistance by entering into barter arrangements involving substantial quantities of our surplus rice, thereby setting a precedent for some other countries."

America's rice dumping showed many people what her "aid" was really like.

We recall the talk we had with a leading Burma statesman.

"The worst threat to Burma today," he said, "is economic colonialism, which will be followed by economic slavery. That is the aim pursued by American 'aid'. It is more like the copper rings worn by the Padaung women than the lifebelt Washington claims it to be."

The Pyedawtha Plan provided for the development of the mining and oil industries. The foreign monopolies en-

trenched in Burma's economy torpedoed it. British scientists said that Burma had no iron ore or coal, and there was hence no sense in building up her industry. Burma's economic independence, they alleged, was a utopia. That was an outright lie. Burma has coal and iron and other minerals. There are rich oil deposits in the Yenangyaung area. In fact, Yenangyaung means "oil river". Before the war Burma produced almost 1,000,000 tons of oil per annum. The Kachin and Shan States, and especially Tenasserim and Bawdwin, are rich in lead and silver. Tin and tungsten are found in the Mergui, Tavoy and Amherst areas, in Tenasserim and in the Kayah mountain region. Burma also possesses zinc, copper, nickel, chromium, molybdenum, platinum, gold, antimony, mica and gems. The thing is to get to them in spite of Nature's obstacles and the foreign monopoly intrigues.

While the British specialists questioned the presence of natural riches, their American colleagues doubted both these and the Burman's ability to develop them. Soviet engineer V. Sosnov, who has lived in Burma for quite a long time, says: "Some time ago certain foreign specialists alleged that the Burmese would never make good miners. In Rangoon I studied in detail the thick two-volume *Comprehensive Report on Burma's Economic and Technical Development* compiled for the Burmese Government a few years ago by Knappen, Tippetts and Abbott Engineering Company. The authors claimed bluntly and cynically that the Burmans showed no proclivity for mining and that because of this mining concerns often could not train even 'sergeants' and 'corporals' for this industry. The question of training specialists of higher qualifications was not even raised. To use the company's terminology, the Americans were clearly boosting themselves for the jobs of 'generals' and 'officers' in Burma's mining industry."

Of late the "generals" and "officers" of the American monopolies have intensified their assault upon Burma's economy. Burmese newspapers report that the General



Exploration Company of California has got the Burmese Government to grant it a concession to explore for oil and gas in the area where oil extraction rights had already been granted to the Anglo-Burmese Burma Oil Company.

In August 1959 Burma was visited by a group of American industrialists. The U.S. Development Loan Fund and the Wall Street-controlled International Bank for Reconstruction and Development are also licking their chops. The sum total of credits, loans and financial aid in other forms given Burma, including Japanese reparations, has already exceeded 2,200 million kyats. The American share comes to 920 million kyats.

The dollar comes hand in hand with propaganda. It is not for nothing that the Chartered Bank of India and the U.S. Information Service are neighbours in Rangoon. Others to have set their snares include the Ford Foundation, the Asian Foundation of America and the Burma-American Institute and Burma-American Cultural Association. Their propaganda fifes pipe tunes about the blessings of the "American way of life" and the SEATO paradise.

The Burmese find this combination of letters extremely jarring. They hear the false notes in it despite the sweetness of its sound. When the United Nations were discussing the Kuomintang aggression against Burma, the *New Times of Burma* wrote that if SEATO were truly a defence organisation, as the Anglo-Americans claimed, its member countries should fully support the Burmese delegation to Lake Success\* when the time came to vote on the Kuomintang aggression against Burma. Generally speaking, the paper added, 90 per cent of Burmese public opinion did not believe the SEATO countries would come to Burma's assistance.

Three years later, the *Delhi Times* reported that the U.S. delegate to the SEATO session in November 1957 had declared that the American Administration knew there was

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\* Former U.N. headquarters in New York.—Authors.

no hope of a change in Burma's neutral policy or of her joining SEATO as long as U Nu was at the helm of her government.

The Bombay weekly *Blitz*, quoting circles close to SEATO in Bangkok, described the unseemly behaviour of the Americans in the Shan State, where they sought to foment separatist sentiment. Acting through their propaganda agents in schools and libraries and through the pro-American Shan princes, they are trying to persuade the Shan State to secede from Burma.

To achieve their aims, the Americans employed Israeli "agricultural experts" in the Shan State. A few years ago Sao Kun Cho, head of the Shan State, felt compelled to demand that the Government of the Union of Burma withdraw them because, he said, they were engaged in the main "not in agriculture but in instigating the Shans to struggle for the separation of the Shan States from the Union of Burma".

There are at least two reasons for the heightened interest that the U.S. ruling circles show in the Shan States:

- 1) It is strategically valuable as the "soft underbelly" of the People's Republic of China.

- 2) It presents an opportunity to blackmail Burma into giving up her policy of non-alignment, and joining SEATO.

These and other perfidious imperialist plans are stubbornly resisted by the Burmese people. The well-known Western observer, James Cameron, wrote in an article about Burma that if it was possible to have a Baghdad Pact without Baghdad, it was certainly possible to have a South-East Asian bloc without the South-East Asian countries, Thailand excepted of course.

Burma is pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence and neutrality, which U Nu has described as follows: "Non-participation in any bloc of states, maintenance of friendly relations with all countries."

The Burmese people are coming to realise that there are two prerequisites for genuine independence: a developed



national economy and peace. The Pyedawtha Plan and *Panch Shila*—the policy of peaceful coexistence—are essentially two sides of the same medal. They complement each other. Without peace there can be no prosperity and without a stable and independent economy it is hard to safeguard peace.

Burma has made the first step to free herself from the clutches of the foreign monopolies. The assets of many British companies have been nationalised. The country has again become master of its timber and the Irrawaddy is no longer the demesne of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. The Burmese Government is extending its control over exports and imports, freeing foreign trade from British tutelage and from the stranglehold of the City and Lancashire textile tycoons.

In the decade of her independence Burma has built four times as many schools as were built during the century of British rule. The number of pupils has increased accordingly. The Burmese Government proposes to build a school in every village and to eliminate illiteracy, that pernicious heritage of colonialism.

There is no doubt that Burma has scored many successes. But she still has very many difficulties to overcome. Suffice it to say that her population has increased 20 per cent since the end of the war (to about 20,000,000), while her output per capita is still below pre-war. The agrarian problem is very acute. The country's progressive forces are calling insistently for the abolition of the feudal system of landownership and for agricultural advancement. The measures taken so far, however, have not been sufficiently effective, and that has aroused justified discontent among the people. Replying to his critics, U Nu said: "For Heaven's sake, don't ask for quick results like the miracle of sowing a mango seed now and in the twinkling of an eye make it bear fruit. We don't care to delude the masses like a magician."

Many Burmese, however, protest that they are not asking for miracles, but that years pass without any big changes for the better, that other nations are outpacing them, that they are ready to do everything to help the country take its place among the advanced nations, that they are prepared to make sacrifices for that goal. "Tell us what we must do, how we should employ our strength?" they ask.

Apart from the pernicious legacy of colonialism, the plots and sabotage of foreign monopolies, feudal rule, the destruction wrought by the Second World War, Burma is suffering from incessant internecine strife. The lion's share of her budget goes to the maintenance of an army and a para-military police. That is why peace, within and without, is indispensable to Burma. The quicker a just peace is made secure, the more rapid will be Burma's economic rehabilitation.

The difficulties are many. But the main thing is that the twelve-odd years which have elapsed since Burma's independence have proved convincingly that the colonialists' hopes of re-enslaving her have failed. The Burmese people's spirit is not like the weak neck of a Padaung girl.

Independent Burma is not alone. She has the sympathy and support of the entire awakened East, the sympathy and support of the mighty socialist camp. "I feel that the Soviet people regard us as more than just friends," U Nu declared on his departure from the Soviet Union after his official visit in the autumn of 1955. "They regard us as dear relatives, and the sympathy and kindness shown us have exceeded all expectations."

The friendly Soviet-Burmese relations are a good example of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. Soviet-Burmese friendship grew still stronger in the period between Khrushchov's first visit to Burma in 1955 and the memorable morning of February 16, 1960, when the airliner carrying the Soviet Premier took off for Rangoon. The many visits exchanged by statesmen



and public leaders and the exchange of parliamentary, scientific, technical and other delegations, as well as cultural exchanges, have helped our two nations to know each other better.

"To understand one must love," says a Burmese adage. Soviet people have friendly feelings for the Burmans. That is why they have given them a hand of fraternal and disinterested assistance. "Everyone we met, from the worker to the academician," recalls U Ba Thun, who headed a group of Burmese geologists visiting the Soviet Union, "expressed a readiness to share his knowledge with us and help us develop our country." And Soviet people, from the rank-and-file citizen to the head of Government, have proved that their words are never at variance with their deeds.

That is why on February 16, 1960, the whole of Burma cordially welcomed her friend, her distinguished guest, a simple man, with the words:

"Khrushchov, *mar bar sai!* Long live Khrushchov!"

## WITH AN OPEN HEART

### KHRUSHCHOV, MAR BAR SAI!

On February 16, 1960, all the roads in Burma led to Mingaladon Airport. People came streaming there from all over Rangoon. The inhabitants of the Burmese capital, dressed in their Sunday best, formed a picturesque ring round the airfield, from which roads radiated in all directions. On the pediment of the airport building was a huge green panel with the following words in gold: "Cordial greetings to His Excellency the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics!"

The Burmese newspapers were also full of messages of greeting. The country paid tribute to Khrushchov's tireless efforts to prevent war and ease international tension.

Cordially greeting Premier Khrushchov, the *New Light of Burma* wrote editorially that the country would unhesitatingly dedicate itself to the common cause of world peace.

*The Burman* welcomed Khrushchov's visit and stressed that it would enhance still more the good relations between the two countries. "Burmans," it said, "look upon Mr. Khrushchov as a person genuinely striving for peace."

Zo Min, editor of the newspaper *Htoon*, wrote: "It is said that big news travels like wind. The news of the forthcoming visit to Burma of N. S. Khrushchov, Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, spread like lightning. Ev-



everybody is talking about the good news. It is acclaimed enthusiastically. It lights up smiles on people's faces: our old friend is coming over. . . . The Soviet Union, which has achieved outstanding successes in science and technology, is generously assisting underdeveloped countries. . . . Khrushchov's country is a true friend of the Asian peoples. Burma will welcome Khrushchov as a sincere friend, as the hero of victories for the glory of world peace."

"Khrushchov is coming to Burma as a messenger of peace and international friendship," said Thakin Lwin, Chairman of the Burma TUC. "We workers of Burma are grateful to the Burmese Government for inviting N. S. Khrushchov to our country. We know that this visit has been undertaken to promote peaceful coexistence. It will enhance security in Asia. We are convinced of this by the efforts made by the Soviet Government, headed by Khrushchov, to ease the international tension. These efforts are reducing the distance between nations and strengthening international confidence. . . . The workers of Burma will take advantage of Khrushchov's visit to shake his hand and thank him. . . . In the person of N. S. Khrushchov the Burmese will be welcoming the leader of a people which has always supported the colonies' liberation struggle."

Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, veteran Burmese political leader, poet and philosopher, and International Peace Prize winner, declared: "Khrushchov is the friend of all nations holding dear the cause of peace and independence. He has already been in Burma. The Burmese people then accorded him a cordial welcome. He has now come again. I warmly wish Khrushchov good health and success. . . ."

These words are expressive of the Burmese people's sentiments and wishes. It is not for nothing that the people welcoming Khrushchov carried streamers with the words: "We wish you good health!"

The airport filled gradually. One limousine after another pulled up at the entrance, bringing members of the Bur-

mese Government, prominent politicians, diplomats and public figures. Under the reinforced concrete awning of the airport stood Soviet Embassy officials headed by Ambassador A. M. Ledovsky and the Soviet specialists helping the Burmese people to build, to learn, to develop the country's mineral wealth.

A white Cadillac flying the Soviet and Burmese flags drove on to the field. The number on its plate was laconic: 1. It brought President U Win Maung. He was dressed in a national costume which resembles a skirt and is called longyi: a wide piece of cloth tied in front at the waist in a knot. Over the longyi he wore a short collarless brown jacket with long sleeves; on his head was a kerchief of pale pink muslin, its ends hanging down over the right ear.

All the members of the Burmese Government, with the exception of Prime Minister Ne Win, who was in army uniform, wore national clothes of diverse colours.

From the blue cloudless sky came the mounting drone of plane engines. Shading their eyes, the people looked at the sky. The IL-18, escorted by Burmese fighter planes, roared over the field and suddenly disappeared. A moment later, just as suddenly, it reappeared, heading for the airstrip. We looked at our watches as it touched down—12.56 p.m. Rangoon time (8.56 a.m. Moscow time).

We had witnessed the marvellous skill of Chief Pilot Nikolai Tsybin on many occasions. This time, too, he landed with mathematical precision and taxied the plane to the long strip of red carpet—the strip of honour.

Khrushchov was met by President U Win Maung, Prime Minister Ne Win and members of his Cabinet. The Soviet Premier warmly greeted them. News-reel cameras purred, photo cameras clicked, the rod-like microphones of the recording machinery swayed.

The guests and hosts proceeded to a glass pavilion in the right wing of the airport building. It was the VIP pavilion and after the heat outside it was a real pleasure to find oneself in its air-conditioned confines.



Numerous microphones had been installed there. President U Win Maung addressed Khrushchov.

"We now greet you not as a stranger," he said, "but as a friend who has come to us again with the purpose of strengthening the existing bonds of friendship between our two countries, which you helped to forge during your first visit."

Premier Khrushchov thanked the President and the Burmese Government for the invitation to visit Burma and for the cordial welcome.

"It is with a clear and open heart that we have come to the home of a friend," he said. "We trust that our meetings with the Burmese leaders will help to promote friendship between our countries and the great cause of securing lasting peace the world over."

As though answering those who alleged that the visit of peace and friendship to the South-East Asian countries pursued some special "secret aims", Khrushchov declared that the "secrets" were simple—achievement of universal and lasting peace on earth.

"We want Soviet and Burmese children, children in all countries of the world," he said, "to sleep peacefully and never to go through the horrors of war. We want their future to be as clear and bright as the sky over Rangoon today."

Khrushchov, President U Win Maung, Prime Minister Ne Win, the Soviet guests and the Burmese officials then left the airport building and drove off to Rangoon. All along the highway running across picturesque hilly terrain, dotted here and there with groves of quaint tropical trees, the distinguished guest was cheered by the inhabitants of the Burmese capital.

They were people of different ages, professions and social standing: gray-haired old men in national costumes, children in school jackets, women in white blouses and skirts of all hues, workers, small tradesmen, government clerks, members of the All-Burma Youth League, Women's

League, Peasant Union, and Buddhist monks in their bright yellow robes with black umbrellas.

"Khrushchov, *mar bar sai!*" they cheered.

It was five years since Premier Khrushchov's first visit to Burma. Not a small span of time for a country which won its independence a mere twelve years before. For Burma those had been years of inner-political struggle, years of intensified pressure exerted on the government by the domestic reactionaries and imperialist forces with a view to forcing her to give up her peaceful foreign policy based on neutrality and peaceful coexistence, years of early successes and occasional set-backs in her economic development.

Partitioned palm-mat structures stood at fairly regular intervals along the verdured streets through which the cars passed. Next to them, on fences, telegraph poles and house-walls, one saw bits of yellow, red and violet posters and portraits, washed by tropical showers and scorched by the sun. These were polling booths. Ten days before, on February 6, Rangoon and other towns, and villages scattered in the jungles and the almost inaccessible mountains, went to the polls to elect the Chamber of Deputies and decide an acute political issue: who will win—the "Clear" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League led by U Nu or the "Stable" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League?

What is the origin of these two parties? There was a time when the AFPFL was one organisation. It was in power permanently from 1948 on. The split into two factions—the "Clear" and the "Stable"—occurred in April 1958. The "Clear" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, the Burmese say, speaks for the small and middle bourgeoisie; and the "Stable" for the big compradore bourgeoisie. The backbone of the latter is made up of Right-wing Socialists and of the upper crust of the trade unions which



they control. Furthermore, it has the backing of the Rightist military.

As we have said, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League played a decisive part in the Burmese national-liberation movement. It rallied the patriotic groups, which joined forces to drive the Japanese out during the Second World War, end British colonial rule, and achieve independence. In those days the League united the masses—peasants, workers, intellectuals, tradesmen, monks and even the patriotically minded capitalists, and a section of the landlords. Its first president was Burma's national hero, Aung San, and its general secretary—the Communist Thakin Than Tun.

As soon as Burma won independence, the imperialist countries, primarily the United States and Britain, set out to hamper the growth and development of the young state. It was not without the meddling of Western agents that the civil war broke out. It was directed chiefly against the Communist Party which, in spite of its part in the liberation struggle and its great popularity, especially among the peasants, was forced to leave the League in 1948 and go underground.

The imperialists know very well that the Communists are the staunchest defenders of national interests and try to scare the national bourgeoisie with the "Communist bogey" into going over to their side, turn it into an accomplice and use it to restore the rule of foreign capital. The imperialist powers and domestic reactionaries do their utmost to keep the civil war alive, foment internal political struggle and undermine Burma's independence by perpetuating her backwardness as purveyor of raw materials to Western countries, primarily Britain and the United States.

The civil war now "eats up" about 50 per cent of the government budget and impairs the country's economy. That is why the people are demanding an end to it. In one of his poems, the Grand Old Man Thakin Kodaw Hmaing

stressed that the enemies of Burma's independence, the imperialists, are the only ones to benefit from the internal strife in Burma.

*For them everything is as it should be,  
And probably even more so:  
Blood's streaming and streaming torrentially,  
And Burma grows weaker once more.  
Today we must act with dash and verve,  
Today for our rights we must fight.  
For if our country we all want to serve,  
Our efforts we must unite.*

Unite efforts—such is the will of the Burmese people. Yearning for peace at home, they are demanding equitable political negotiations with the Communist Party and its legalisation, guarantees of democratic rights, and unity of national forces striving for the consolidation of independence.

This programme of action, however, does not suit the reactionaries at home, and especially the imperialist powers. It is with their assistance that reaction has in recent years intensified its onslaught not only against the democratic forces but also against the peaceful policy followed by U Nu's Government. The split in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League in 1958 is of their doing.

Denouncing imperialist intrigues in Burma, the Indian *Navbharat Times* wrote at the time that certain foreign powers were weaving a plot to overthrow Prime Minister U Nu and inveigle Burma into SEATO. And, speaking of the split in the League, it said bluntly that the break-up in the Burmese ruling party was engineered by the SEATO powers.

In October 1958 U Nu's Government was compelled to resign and abandon power to a provisional government headed by General Ne Win, Commander of the Armed Forces. The domestic reactionaries intensified their attacks against the country's independent foreign policy and de-



manded its revision. Some of the Rangoon newspapers called for Burma's joining SEATO. Their pages were full of articles criticising neutrality. Those who questioned the logic and purport of Burma's policy of non-participation in aggressive blocs became more and more vocal, saying "Burma will lose nothing by joining SEATO".

The shadow of SEATO, the tool that the 20th-century colonialists use in their ventures and provocations, hovered ominously over the country. The growing threat presented by the domestic and foreign reactionaries alarmed the patriots, who clearly saw that Burma's adherence to SEATO and renunciation of neutrality would mean the loss of all the gains made in a long and difficult struggle, the loss of the independence for which the best sons of Burma had given their lives.

Speaking of the prevailing political situation, U Nu told a conference of leaders of local "Clear" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League branches that "it is a life or death matter for the Burmese people".

And life won!

The "Clear" League, which called for the stability of the Union of Burma, for national unity and domestic and world peace, neutrality and international understanding and co-operation, obtained an overwhelming majority of votes. It obtained 160 seats in Parliament out of 250, while the "Stable" League got only 44. The remaining seats went to the smaller parties and the national minorities.

The Burmese press said the results came as a big surprise to many. None of the predictions made by party leaders and newspapers came true—the domestic reactionaries and certain sections of the Burmese army had been certain that victory would go to the "Stable" League, which represented chiefly their interests. The worst they had expected was a draw between the two factions, in which case they would have had to seek the support of other parties, for they could not have formed a stable government by themselves.

U Nu's opponents ascribe his victory to his personal popularity. It is true that he has many followers, but it would be truer to say that, asked to choose between political and economic independence and neutrality, on the one hand, and the loss of independence, adherence to the imperialist policy of military ventures, subordination to foreign capital and continuation of the civil war, on the other, the people made the right choice. And that was the main thing.

The Burmese voted unanimously for the policy which accords with their national interests. Time will show how consistently and fully the "Clear" League will carry out the promises that brought it victory in the elections.

The open Cadillac with Khrushchov and U Win Maung, escorted by motorcycles, drove slowly along the highway from Mingaladon to downtown Rangoon. The human whirlpool became more and more turbulent, particularly in the Mayiangan district and near the University.

The people of Rangoon waved little Soviet and Burmese flags as they welcomed the Soviet Premier. Just as in hospitable India, whence Khrushchov had just come, he was greeted with slogans for a durable peace and closer friendship among the nations.

Yes, the simple words "peace" and "friendship" are now near and dear to all peoples. That is why Rangoon welcomed the mission with which the head of the Soviet Government had come to Burma with so much enthusiasm.

As the car entered Rangoon, a big crowd surrounded it and stopped the motorcade. People cheered, applauded, tried to shake the hand of the Soviet visitor, or at least to touch him. The car was showered with flowers and confetti.

A young Burman shouldered his way through the crowd and put a dove into the car—in Burma, as elsewhere, it symbolises peace. Frightened by the noise and the cheers



the dove tried to flit out, but Khrushchov took it into his hands and petted it. The dove calmed down and sat comfortably in his hands.

"It senses that you are a friend," said President U Win Maung.

True enough, the dove travelled with Khrushchov all the way to the Presidential Palace.

It was some time before the car with the Soviet Premier broke out of the crowd and resumed its journey.

The column of cars entered the wide Insein Road. President U Win Maung drew Khrushchov's attention to the surroundings.

"You may recall," he said, "that this street was much narrower in 1955. We have recently rebuilt it and now, as you see, it is a wide thoroughfare leading to the centre of the city."

"To the right," he continued, "is our new radio station. And this is the stand from which we review parades on Independence Day and other holidays."

The motorcade finally arrived at the Presidential Palace. That is where the head of the Soviet Government would stay during his visit. The big edifice was built late in the 19th century and was at one time the residence of the British governor-general. From here the colonialists tried to rule the unconquered people of the conquered country. Like the colonial rulers' palaces in India and other Eastern countries, it was built to "impress" the population, to convince them of the British Empire's might, grandeur and indestructibility.

A wide staircase led from the hall to the first floor. Khrushchov observed:

"It is not for nothing that the governor had such stairs leading to his chambers. He apparently wanted every Burman ascending them to feel that he was going to the Lord himself."

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According to the usual procedure, after a brief rest, the head of the Soviet Government was to pay a visit to President U Win Maung. The chambers placed at his disposal were in the same wing and the same floor as the President's. The "visit", therefore, meant that the distinguished guest walked to the reception room half-way between the two parts of the palace. The head of the Burmese state proceeded there as well.

U Win Maung was elected President of the Union of Burma in March 1957. He is a Karen by nationality, the leader of the Union Karen League, and his election to the presidency was regarded as a concession to the Karen national minority's insistent demand that they be given a responsible post.

During the Second World War U Win Maung fought against the Japanese occupation forces at the head of a guerilla unit operating in the Japanese rear. He joined the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League after the proclamation of Burmese independence and held diverse ministerial posts in U Nu's Government.

The Burmese Constitution does not endow the President with wide powers. But though his powers are limited, he is able to exert a distinct influence on the country's political affairs.

During the recent crisis, U Win Maung maintained a neutral stand as prescribed by the Constitution, and took no part in the rivalry between the two factions of the League. For several days before the elections he received no visitors and prayed and fasted.

On the basic international issues, U Win Maung is said to share U Nu's views; he also favours neutrality, non-participation in military blocs, and the policy of peace and international co-operation.

The talk between U Win Maung and Khrushchov proceeded in an atmosphere of friendship. The Burmese President reminded the Soviet Premier that they had met during Khrushchov's visit to Burma in 1955. U Win Maung,



then Minister of Transport and Communications, accompanied the Soviet delegation on a cruise along the Rangoon River. On behalf of the Soviet Government, Khrushchov invited the President to visit the Soviet Union. The invitation was accepted.

In the afternoon, the head of the Soviet Government met Prime Minister Ne Win. Though at the helm of government, the latter was still staying at the residence of the Chief of the General Staff in the picturesque lake district in the northern part of the capital.

General Ne Win greeted the Soviet guest at the entrance to his residence, a modern mansion. This time the Prime Minister had changed his uniform for a European-style suit. It may be noted in passing that very few Burmans wear European clothes.

Khrushchov first met General Ne Win during his visit in 1955. The latter was then Chief of the General Staff and, together with the then Defence Minister U Ba Swe, accompanied the Soviet government delegation to Mandalay and Maymyo, the seat of the headquarters of Burma's Northern Military Area. The members of the Soviet delegation went there as guests of the Burmese army.

General Ne Win recalled their meeting and said the participants in the military parade held in honour of the Soviet visitors in Maymyo had not forgotten the good wishes Khrushchov had then expressed.

Addressing the Burmese generals, officers and soldiers, Khrushchov had said: "Like you, we are compelled to maintain armed forces. We train them in a spirit of love for their country, in a spirit of readiness to sacrifice their lives, if need be, to defend their country against encroachment by foreign invaders.

"I wish the same to your armed forces, that they be prepared honourably to uphold the independence won at the cost of blood...."

A few words about Ne Win.

He was the first Chief of Staff of the Burma Independence Army. Later, after the tragic death of Aung San, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief. At one time—in 1949—he was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in U Nu's Cabinet.

Ne Win became Prime Minister in 1958, after the split in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League and the ensuing developments. The activities of his government on the home front met with a mixed reception. Some reproached it for refusing to negotiate with the insurgents and seeking to suppress them by force of arms, pointing out that instead of helping to pacify the country this had only served to reopen the wounds that had just begun to heal.

After the general election which, as we have already said, resulted in an overwhelming victory for U Nu's party, Ne Win's military government resigned as it had promised, and yielded power to the victors. It is not often that generals voluntarily surrender power! In one of his talks in Burma, Khrushchov declared that it was a big honour to govern a nation with a mandate from it, and a dishonour, a disgrace, to rule without such a mandate.

As for its foreign policy, Ne Win's Government adhered to Burma's traditional course of strengthening neutrality and turning South-East Asia into a "peace zone"—and that in face of strong Western pressure. This was reflected in the Soviet-Burmese Communiqué of February 18 and in the Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression concluded by Prime Minister Ne Win and the Government of the People's Republic of China on January 28. This treaty binds the signatories not to conclude any military alliances directed against either of them.

In his talks with the Burmese political leaders, Prime Minister Ne Win included, Khrushchov pointed out that relations between the U.S.S.R. and Burma had been good when the government was headed by U Nu, had remained good when Ne Win was Prime Minister, and that the



Soviet Union wanted to maintain friendly relations with the Union of Burma whatever party came into power.

Recalling his talk with Prime Minister Ne Win, the Soviet Premier later said it had made a very favourable impression on him.

Khrushchov told Ne Win that the Soviet Union would like to remain friends with him as a military leader after he had resigned his premiership. He added that Ne Win would be a welcome guest in Moscow if he found it possible to come to the Soviet Union. The General accepted the invitation with pleasure.

In April 1960 Ne Win resigned as Prime Minister and returned to his old job of Chief of the Army General Staff.

When Khrushchov returned to his residence after his talk with Ne Win, he was visited by U Nu.

"It was a pleasure," the Soviet Premier said in his speech at the mass rally at the Palace of Sports in Moscow on his return from his tour of South-East Asian countries, "to renew contact with other old Burmese acquaintances, particularly U Nu, the former Prime Minister, a supporter of the policy of peace and peaceful coexistence. His party won the overwhelming majority of votes at the recent general election and is to form a new government in April."

These words were greeted with applause. Khrushchov smiled and continued:

"Some people will perhaps interpret your applause as interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We had a most satisfactory talk with that distinguished statesman in Rangoon, and were glad to meet him again in Calcutta, where he arrived simultaneously with us."

Asked by the Japanese *Asahi Janaru* to comment on his meetings with Khrushchov, U Nu said: "To put it briefly, Khrushchov is a charming man. He says what he thinks. Khrushchov loves people. And I like that."

The meeting with U Nu proceeded in a very cordial and friendly atmosphere. U Nu was accompanied by U Ohn,

now Union League Treasurer and formerly Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., who is well remembered in Moscow.

There seemed to be a halo of victory around U Nu in those early post-election days. One could see how happy the success of his party had made him. Khrushchov congratulated him warmly on the victory and wished him further success in the struggle for the consolidation of Burma's independence, the struggle for peace and international friendship.

Asked how things were going in the Soviet Union, Khrushchov told U Nu about the vast economic, scientific and technological progress achieved since his earlier visit. U Nu listened attentively. From time to time he shook his head in amazement at the marvellous successes scored by the Soviet people.

On March 27 U Nu was ordained priest and retired to a Buddhist monastery, where he remained until the opening of the new Parliament which handed the reins of government to his Cabinet. In his speech U Nu stressed that the new Burmese Government would adhere to the policy of positive neutrality and non-participation in blocs and would do everything in its power to further world peace. He added that he would exert every possible effort to promote a close friendship with the neighbouring countries.

Speaking of Burma's economic policy, U Nu emphasised that the new government favoured putting trade and industry under the control of national capital.

In his statement on domestic policy, the Prime Minister urged broader democracy and restoration of national peace. However, the programme of the new government, and that of the Union League, as the "Clear" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League is now called, is not quite conclusive. The Union League insists on the unconditional surrender of the insurrection forces, while the Communist



Party demands amnesty, legalisation and release of political prisoners.

On April 4 Khrushchov sent U Nu a telegram congratulating him on his inauguration as Prime Minister.

In his reply, U Nu stressed the vast importance of the Soviet Premier's visit to Burma. "Your visit to our country," he wrote, "was illustrative of the goodwill the Soviet people and you personally entertain for the Burmese people, and contributed greatly to promoting closer friendship and mutual understanding between our peoples."

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After his talk with U Nu, Khrushchov had about forty-five minutes in which to rest. Then more meetings and more talks followed, this time at the banquet given for him by President U Win Maung.

Welcoming the Soviet Premier, U Win Maung said the Burmese people were happy to receive him and that if his first visit had contributed positively to the consolidation of Soviet-Burmese friendship, the second visit was a manifestation of its strength. In his reply, Khrushchov proposed a toast to closer friendship and co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and Burma.

The banquet ended late at night. The newspaper correspondents accompanying Khrushchov sat down to real work—they had to select the most interesting and most vivid impressions gathered on that eventful day, write their reports about the warm and cordial welcome accorded Khrushchov by the people of Rangoon and the Burmese leaders, and to cable them to Moscow. They also had to acquaint themselves, if only briefly, with the next day's programme. During that day, which unfortunately still had only 24 hours, it was also necessary to carve out some time to see Rangoon, its wonderful pagodas and other ancient monuments. All that required time, something we constantly lacked,

## MAY THE MANGO BLOOM!

Dawn had just broken over Rangoon, but its streets were seething with life. From the windows of the Kambowza (Cambodia) Hotel, where the Soviet journalists were staying, there opened a marvellous view of Lake Inya. Buried in sumptuous tropical verdure and looking more like a fairy-tale castle than an hotel, the Kambowza is perched on one of the hills rising over the capital.

A panorama of the city unfolds from the top-storey balcony. The exquisite silhouettes of the golden pagodas and the huge crowns of evergreen trees were outlined clearly against the orange backdrop of the rising sun. The lake, the near-by streets, the whole of the city were still enveloped in a mist. But the orange strip in the east grew rapidly and soon the first rays of the rising sun merrily lit up the spires of the pagodas, the roofs of houses, the branches of trees. We looked on amazed as the dense grayish-white mist rose rapidly, evaporated and added tons of humidity to the myriads of waterdrops filling the atmosphere over Rangoon. The first buses, cars and pedicabs appeared in the streets. The air was rent by the cries of street vendors who carried their "shops" on yokes, and monks garbed in orange robes walked from house to house, collecting their daily alms.

Poetic though the morning was, the second day of our stay in hospitable Burma started prosaically for us Soviet journalists. Instead of inhaling the intoxicating fragrance of the morning freshness we had to imbibe the so well-known smell of fresh printer's ink.

In the spacious hotel lobby we found an official of the Burmese Foreign Ministry, waiting for us with a bundle of Rangoon dailies. Unfortunately, he spoke no English and we knew no Burmese, and our "talk" was limited to smiles and gestures. Suddenly, showing us the newspapers with photographs of Khrushchov, he uttered, and almost with-



out an accent, the only Russian word he had learned that far—"Khorosho" ("Good").

We took the newspapers and deployed ourselves to the nooks of the lobby, sitting down to work to the hum of the overhead fans.

The front pages carried big portraits of Khrushchov and detailed reports about the first day of his visit. Many published the text of the speeches he and President U Win Maung exchanged at Mingaladon Airport.

Welcoming the Soviet Premier to Burma, the *Hanthawaddy* said the Burmese people cherished and appreciated his mission of peace and friendship to Asian countries, directed at achieving general and complete disarmament, banning nuclear weapons and promoting friendship among the nations.

Cordial greetings to Khrushchov were extended by Hla Maung, secretary-general of the All-Burma Federation of Students' Unions. Speaking on behalf of the country's youth, he said: "We know that Khrushchov always does what he says. His proposal for total and universal disarmament is of historic importance. This bold and effective proposal is an invaluable gift to mankind! That is why the students are so glad to meet Khrushchov, the man who means business, who has done so much to strengthen peace. We take pride in according him hospitality."

"Khrushchov's disarmament proposals are a torch of peace," said Maung Pin, chairman of the People's Youth of Burma organisation. "Just as dark clouds disappear when the sun shines bright, so do peace and joy reign when Khrushchov, the standard-bearer of peace, arrives."

And U Pe Tin, editor-in-chief of the *New Times of Burma*, wrote that Khrushchov brought cheer wherever he went.

Yes, there was good cheer in Rangoon and throughout Burma all through the brief but extremely eventful visit of the head of the Soviet Government. The meetings of good old friends are always cheerful!

There were some, however, whose mood was spoiled;

the 21-gun salute in Khrushchov's honour caused an unpleasant vibration of aluminium and a nervous jingle of glass at the foreign company offices in Bogyoke Street and Strand Road.

The foes of closer Soviet-Burmese friendship tried to sow confusion with the aid of the newspapermen in their pay. Especially and insensibly zealous in this respect was the *Nation*. This newspaper tried to scare its readers with the communist bogey, feed them indigestible slander concocted by patent anti-Sovieteers, provocatively attacked certain Soviet journalists and, finally, donned the garb of a Doubting Thomas and questioned the practicability of Soviet assistance to Burma. Even ruder and more brazen was the *Candid* which, probably forgetting its microscopic circulation and miserable reputation, put on airs as though it were at least an equal of the *New York Times*.

In Burma, where the tropical heat is unbearable, shadow is as valuable as gold. But there is shadow and shadow. When an attempt is made to cast it on Soviet-Burmese relations, it is not worth a counterfeit kyat in Burmese eyes. The stupid attacks by the *Nation* and *Candid* proved to be nothing but a cry in the wilderness. Nothing can dampen the friendly feelings the Burmese people entertain for the Soviet Union. They remember that the U.S.S.R. came to Burma's assistance and bought the rice surpluses which had accumulated through U.S. monopoly dumping. What the Soviet Union is building in Burma is not military bases and rocket ramps, but an institute, a hotel and a hospital. The Soviet Union is promoting its political, economic and cultural ties with Burma on a basis of equality. And for that the Burmese people are profoundly grateful to the Soviet people. Burmans are thankful for the generous assistance the U.S.S.R. renders them without any strings, stressed the *New Light of Burma*.

A horn hooted nervously outside the hotel. The chauffeur explained in pidgin English that we should hurry—the cars



with Premier Khrushchov and his party had left the Presidential Palace. We caught up with the official motorcade at a little shaded park in the centre of the city, near the Shwedagon Pagoda. The park is a sanctuary for every Burman, for it is there that the Arzani Mausoleum—a low platform with a wide roof on columns—stands in memory of Aung San, a great son of a heroic people, a man who devoted his short but colourful life to Burma's liberation from colonial slavery.

The Soviet Premier ascended the steps of the mausoleum in silence. Ahead were seven gravestones of white marble and over each, on a column, hung a portrait. The tomb in the centre was Aung San's. Looking at us from the portrait was the resolute face of a young officer—his eyes clear, forehead high, chin firm.

Khrushchov laid a wreath of red roses upon the grave. The red streamer bore the inscription: "To the hero of the Burmese people from Khrushchov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R."

The solemn, mournful silence was broken by the Last Post, sounded by buglers in white naval uniforms.

The Burmese call the Arzani Mausoleum Martyrs' Grave. On July 19 the country marks Martyrs' Day.

The story of that tragic day in 1947 was told to Khrushchov by U Myint Thein, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Burma.

"Several men armed with tommy-guns entered the Secretariat building, then housing the government, shortly after 10 a.m. They did not arouse suspicion, for they were in army uniform. But, then, there were no guards around the building anyway. Aung San was very popular, the people loved him, and he never expected an attempt on his life. The tommy-gunners entered the building unmolested, broke into the hall where the cabinet had just gone into session under the chairmanship of Aung San, and fired at them point-blank."

"How many did they kill?" Khrushchov asked,

"Seven: Aung San, Thakin Mya, Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Socialist Party, U Ba Jo, Minister of Information, Abdul Razak, Minister of Education and Chairman of the Burmese Moslem League, U Ba Win, Aung San's brother and Minister of Trade, Man Ba Khaing, the Karen leader, and Mong Pan, Adviser on Border Area Affairs. Only three cabinet members escaped death. U Nu, fortunately, was not present at that fateful meeting: he was then President of the Consultative Assembly, not a cabinet member."

"And whom did the people slain by the terrorists represent?"

"The patriotic forces opposing British imperialism. They were leaders of the national-liberation movement."

"I have been told that your brother, then the Foreign Minister, was also killed," Khrushchov observed.

"Yes, only a year after Aung San's dastardly murder," U Myint Thein replied, adding bitterly, "by no one knows who. His grave is also in this park—there, opposite the Arzani Mausoleum."

And he pointed at a grave some distance away.

Khrushchov then asked who killed Aung San and his comrades, what the motives were and where the traces led.

"It was a political murder and the assassins were morally supported from abroad, they may even have been encouraged," U Myint Thein said, choosing his words carefully. "The man directly responsible for it was U Saw, the Prime Minister of the last colonial government before the Japanese occupation."

"Where was he during the war?"

"Just before Japan's entry into the war the British arrested him on suspicion of being connected with the Japanese intelligence service and sent him to Africa, to Uganda, where he was interned for the duration of the war. There he met Churchill. When the war ended, U Saw returned to Burma. But he was no longer the big shot he had



been. His Myo-chit Party could not stand up to the Anti-Fascist League in popularity. That maddened him. He accused the League's young leaders of opportunism, then decided to do away with them, hired bandits and sent them against Aung San."

But then U Saw was himself only a hireling. Behind him were the imperialist forces striving to decapitate and suppress the national-liberation movement. It is they who brought U Saw to Burma from Africa, it is they who helped him rebuild the hornet's nest called the Myo-chit Party which had sunk into the mire of political fraud and demagoguery, stopped at nothing to achieve its ends, and was ready to sell itself to the highest bidder, British or Japanese. . . .

The brutal murder shocked Rangoon. The tragic news spread like wildfire. Crowds began to gather at the Secretariat building. In the evening Sir Hubert Rance, the British Governor-General, broadcast a statement announcing with "profound regret" the dastardly assassination of the members of the Executive Council. Shortly after 10 a.m., he said, several men armed with tommy-guns broke into the Council's meeting hall and opened fire. The men killed were Aung San, Vice-Chairman of the Council, and Council members Thakin Mya, Man Ba Khaing, U Ba Jo, Abdul Razak and U Ba Win.

Oh, infamous British hypocrisy! Sir Hubert named the victims, but refrained from naming the real murderers. As Tom Driberg, the Labour M.P., said in the House of Commons, "the moral guilt of the assassination attaches less, perhaps, to the brutal gunmen in Rangoon than to the comfortable Conservative gentlemen here [in Britain] who incited U Saw to treachery and sabotage". Two years earlier, denouncing reaction's plans, Driberg said bluntly that U Saw was very much favoured by British officials in Burma and that they regarded him as the "strong man" they could use in their political intrigues against the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

"How old were the murdered men?" asked Premier Khrushchov.

"The oldest, Abdul Razak, was 57 and the youngest, Aung San, 32."

The Soviet Premier looked intently at Aung San's portrait.

"Yes, he died young. He could have done so much for his country."

Aung San died just half a year before his cherished dream came true and his dearly beloved country was proclaimed independent, became a "Burmese Burma", as he loved to say. But even his death served the cause of her liberation. The tragic death of their leaders did not daunt the people and only added to their determination to fight until final victory. Indignation swept the country. An armed rising was in the air. The "comfortable gentlemen" in London backed down, while their "strong man" was strung up. A few days later the British Government was compelled to announce its "readiness" to grant Burma independence.

The Burmese people understood and learned much in those days. They understood that the colonialists had no intention of giving up their holdings voluntarily, that they were prepared to go to any length to achieve their selfish aims. Every Burman knows that colonialist intrigues against his country continue to this day. Suffice it to recall the repeated attempts made to undermine Burma's peaceful neutral policy and economy, and to drag her into the aggressive SEATO bloc. But the peace-loving Burmese people, faithful to the behests of Aung San, stand firmly by the principles of peaceful coexistence and uphold their country's independence.

Burma venerates the memory of her outstanding hero. His portraits may be seen everywhere—in the luxurious chambers of the Presidential Palace and the squalid bamboo hut of the peasant. There is General Aung San Avenue



in Rangoon and an Aung San Park in the Kan Daw Gyi district. There is a bronze monument there of Aung San in a military uniform, leaning forward, as though calling and leading his people to victory, freedom, happiness. And it is symbolic that opposite the monument is the Technological Department of Rangoon University, in which the children of the New Burma acquire knowledge to make Aung San's dreams come true!

The buglers again sounded the Last Post. Khrushchov left the Arzani Mausoleum, the Martyrs' Grave.

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Technological Institute of the Union of Burma will be the official name of the higher educational establishment now under construction in a picturesque spot of Rangoon, near lively Insein Road. This spot is well known not only to every resident of the capital but to many foreign tourists who, after visiting the famous Shwedagon, the Peace Pagoda and other sights, usually come there.

Addressing the students and professors of Rangoon University during his first visit to Burma in 1955, Khrushchov said:

"The Soviet people are ready to share their experience and knowledge with you. . . . We sincerely want to contribute to your economic development."

Under the Soviet-Burmese Statement of 1956, signed during the visit of friendship made to Burma by First Deputy Premier A. I. Mikoyan and Chairman S. R. Rashidov of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet, the Soviet Government undertook to build as a gift to the Burmese people a technological institute, a hotel, a hospital, a range of cultural and sports facilities, and a theatre. The Burmese Government decided to reciprocate with a gift of rice.

The technological institute and the hotel are now under construction in Rangoon, and the hospital, which will be equipped with the latest apparatus, is being built in Taunggyi.

The foundation stone of the main building of the institute was laid on April 21, 1958, at a ceremony attended by President U Win Maung and Prime Minister U Nu. The construction job is now nearing completion.

In their speeches then, U Win Maung and U Nu stressed the vast importance of the institute for 1,100 students and 100 post-graduates. For it would be the smithy turning out qualified specialists so essential for the country's economic development.

The country is just beginning to build up an army of technicians and scientists. The old colonial Burma lacked the conditions for that. Commenting on the Soviet Government's offer to build a technological institute, *New Times of Burma* wrote that "... thanks to the generous foresight and friendship of Soviet Russian leaders, an important Technological Institute is now to be opened for the youths of this land. What British colonial regime had denied to the Burmese for the last one hundred years or so, a new friend of free Burma has come forward with the utmost goodwill. In so far as this first gift of the Russian people is concerned, it not only fills a genuine need of the people but also fills the niche of honour. . . ."

The construction of the main academic and three laboratory buildings, the hostel for the students and post-graduates, and twenty-four cottages for the teaching staff was nearing its end. The institute was also to have a mess for the students, a dispensary, sports facilities, a printing shop and workshops.

The institute was being built by 1,300 Burmese workers, Soviet specialists and engineers. There had been quite a few difficulties—Burma's natural conditions, tropical showers and the scorching heat, the Burmese workers' inexperience in modern building techniques, and many others. But they have all been overcome. Working at the construction site, many Burmese, formerly untrained, have become building workers, plasterers, welders, electricians, bulldozer, crane and excavator operators. More than 1,200 work-



ers have been taught twenty-two trades—and that is only a preliminary result. They have acquired these building trades with the assistance of their friends, the Soviet workers and engineers, who have not only explained patiently what should be done, but—not being in the least afraid to soil their hands—have actually shown them how to do it.

The day Khrushchov visited the builders of the Technological Institute was a big holiday. The Burmese workers and the Soviet specialists gave the Soviet Premier a rousing welcome. The arch at the entrance bore the inscriptions "Welcome!" in Russian and "We wish you good health!" in Burmese. The distinguished guest was presented with flowers. Applause and cheers came from everywhere—the windows, the roofs, the tower cranes (incidentally, the first in Burma).

"Hurrah! Long live Khrushchov!"

At the main building Khrushchov was welcomed by Professor Hla Myint, Rector of the Institute, and the future teachers—all garbed in the traditional black gowns and square caps—and by A. I. Alikhanov, in charge of the construction project, and the Soviet specialists.

After exchanging greetings, Premier Khrushchov entered the main building. Here, in one of the future spacious auditoriums, he examined the plan, diagrams and models, asked how the work was proceeding, what difficulties the builders had to cope with, what this or that detail in the plan stood for.

"Whose plan is it?" Khrushchov asked.

"Soviet," replied Alikhanov.

"Who drew it up?"

"Architect Kuznetsov."

U Ba Li, Professor of the Engineering Faculty, said that after building will have been completed the technological and mechanical departments of Rangoon University would be reorganised into a technological institute. It would be the biggest not only in Burma but in the whole of South-East Asia.

After that, accompanied by a group of Burmese professors, Soviet specialists and numerous newspapermen, Khrushchov proceeded to a clearing, from which unfolded an impressive view of the future institute.

Premier Khrushchov stopped before the students' hostel which, Alikhanov told him, would accommodate 750 students and 62 post-graduates.

The head of the Soviet Government wanted to know what was being done to protect the building from the sultry heat, how things were going with thermal insulation.

"The problem," said Alikhanov, "was given due attention when the plan was being drawn up. It has been solved mainly by the proper orientation of buildings, the construction of special shadings, and through ventilation. Laboratories with electronic apparatus will be air-conditioned."

Alikhanov then drew Khrushchov's attention to the spaciousness of the hostel and the abundance of light in it.

"That's nothing to boast of," Nikita Sergeyevich said, laughing. "Here, in Burma, the thing is not to have too much sunlight...."

"But we shall have window shades and there will be two-room through ventilation."

"That means the rooms will not be sound-proof?"

"No, Nikita Sergeyevich."

"How thick are the walls?"

"One brick thick, twenty-three centimetres."

"Is that enough to protect people from the sun? I think that's too little," Khrushchov remarked.

Alikhanov enumerated the thermal insulation measures taken by the builders and added that this was how other foreign specialists built houses in hot countries.

Khrushchov was not satisfied by that.

"Why do you copy what is obviously inexpedient? Use your own brains to fight heat!"

Premier Khrushchov returned to this question when he was getting into the car to leave the construction site.

"Wouldn't it be better to have two walls with heat in-



sulation material in between?" he asked Alikhanov. "As for ventilation, it won't be of much help here, for the air is too hot, its motion doesn't bring people any relief, it merely makes them feel still more parched. You need drastic measures here."

Giving advice and commenting on certain aspects of the project, Khrushchov voiced appreciation of the construction job on the whole and praised the way it was organised. Where did Alikhanov work before, he asked.

"I was with the Ministry of Construction, built the Altai Tractor Works. . . ."

"Good, very good," the Soviet Premier said. "You and your comrades are doing a very big job learning to build houses in the hot climate. When we were in India, we discussed how best to build workers' housing in those conditions. We shall have to draw up a plan for a workers' development in India. The climate there is as hot as it is here. Our specialists should give serious thought to protecting the future residents from heat. I have some ideas on this score, but then the thing is absolutely new to us. We shall need all the experience you have accumulated here too.

"For India it is possible that we shall propose plaster panels made by the Kozlov method," he continued. "Since the cornices made there protrude far to protect walls from rain, it might be well to think of making walls out of plaster panels. If that won't do, the outer panels can be made of cement and the inner ones of plaster. Plaster panels could be reinforced with bamboo. Bamboo may be used for reinforcing concrete. That will be much cheaper than reinforcing it with steel. In the Soviet Union we are already experimenting with reed-reinforced concrete. Why use steel and iron for reinforcing concrete when they may be put to better use elsewhere? There are vast supplies of bamboo here. It's the reed of the tropics. What's wrong with bamboo-reinforced concrete?"

"I was shown houses made of bamboo-reinforced concrete in China," Alikhanov said. "They are not bad at all."

"That's it, that's it," Khrushchov replied with animation. "Study all the experience there is of building in tropical conditions. We shall need it in assisting other Asian countries. Perhaps we shall instruct civil engineer Lagutenko to work out some of the problems. We have agreed to design and build a model experimental workers' development of prefabricated parts for the Indians."

A Burmese Radio reporter asked Khrushchov to say a few words about his impressions. The Soviet Premier said:

"I think the work has been well done. I am satisfied with the report made by construction chief Alikhanov. The whole project will be completed on schedule and some of the buildings even earlier than planned. The institute has been successfully and rationally designed. The arrangement of rooms and their conveniences are a question of money. There will be two students to a room, while post-graduates will each have a room. Such distribution of floor space is quite rational, in my opinion."

The head of the Soviet Government warmly bade good-bye to everybody—the professors, the Burmese workers and the Soviet specialists. He asked the Rector to convey his regards to the students who, he hoped, would soon move in.

"Good-bye, dear friends!"

The Rector of the Institute invited the distinguished visitor to plant a mango, a tree of friendship, to commemorate his visit to the construction site. Khrushchov consented with pleasure.

Everybody proceeded to the main building, beside which a hole had already been dug. The Soviet Premier carefully lowered the sapling given to him and filled the hole with earth. Khrushchov and Hla Myint were then handed big bowls of water. The Soviet guest smiled as he clinked bowls with his Burmese host, and the two watered the newly planted sapling.

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It is not very likely that Zhenya Kairuk, a boy of no more than four, and five-year-old Ma Win Swe, a graceful Burmese girl in the traditional long skirt *tamein* and with a fancy coiffure, knew each other before. They met when Khrushchov took them in his arms on his arrival from the Technological Institute to Lake Inya. Here, on the shore of this beautiful lake, a hotel is being built with Soviet assistance, a gift from the Soviet Government to the Burmese people.

Zhenya's parents are Soviet specialists and together with Ma Win Swe's mother they are building the hotel. Watching newspaper photographers and news-reel cameramen "shooting" Khrushchov as he held the two children, we involuntarily recalled his speech at Mingaladon Airport. "We want Soviet and Burmese children, children in all countries of the world, to sleep peacefully and never to go through the horrors of war," he said then. "We want their future to be as clear and bright as the sky over Rangoon today."

On his inspection of the hotel, which will be called after the lake, Khrushchov was accompanied by Colonel Bo Taik Soe, head of the Burmese Reconstruction Board, and the building contractor A. I. Alikhanov, V. G. Zoz, who built the Yaroslavl Highway and took part in the construction of the Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw, I. A. Mekryukov, an engineer from Dniepropetrovsk, and other Soviet specialists, and of course by newspaper correspondents, who clambered up the cross-beams, walked upstairs that had no balustrades, climbed into unglazed windows and doorways.

The Soviet Premier inspected the future restaurant, which will accommodate 250 people and will have a banquet room, cinema, post office, barbershop and dispensary. Praising the work done and the designing on the whole, he asked who drew up the plan.

"Architect Andreyev," he was told.

"Oh, he is not a bad architect."

After that he examined the interior decorations.

"Very good!" he exclaimed in English and smiled.

In one of the rooms Khrushchov saw Sergei Petrov, leader of a team of painters and parquet-layers, and spent a few moments watching the experienced worker teach his trade to Burmese. Obviously pleased, he shook hands with the excited team leader and wished him success and good health.

After that the Soviet Premier stepped out on the balcony. Below lay the sparkling turquoise blue lake, peaceful and serene. Its surface was unruffled and even the reflections of trees were still. Khrushchov said he would walk to the shore. There he was shown the boating station and the almost completed swimming pool of a unique shape, three of its corners rounded and the fourth pointed.

"That's a good job," he praised the designers. "That's how things should be done. But I would take that point out," he added with a sharp gesture. "It's better to swim in a round pool and it will be more beautiful too."

"We'll remember your suggestions and round out that corner," replied Alikhanov. "It isn't hard to do."

At the main entrance to the hotel Khrushchov stopped and asked.

"What lights will you have here?"

"Ordinary electric bulbs."

"That's wrong, I think. You should have fluorescent lamps. We invented them, yet we use them very little. We should have the best of everything here, so that people think well of us. The hotel looks good and people judge a hotel by its looks—remember that!"

As he continued his inspection, the Soviet Premier returned to the question he had raised at the Technological Institute construction site.

"Quality! Pay more attention to it when you are building," he said. "I wonder if you need such big windows here. It's hot in Burma. Why have so much glass? You need plenty of it in the north, where there is not enough sun. Here people want to escape from the sun. If you ask me,



I think the walls facing south should be built thick and have as few windows as possible. Glass gets hot in the sun."

The hotel would be air-conditioned, someone pointed out.

"You must excuse me, but I don't think that makes sense," Khrushchov remonstrated. "First you create conditions to make the air stifling hot and then you want to cool it!"

As he was about to leave the construction site, the Soviet Premier asked to have his congratulations conveyed to the architects who had designed the hotel.

"But tell them not to get swell-headed," he added.

When we returned to the Kambowza Hotel, our Burmese colleagues said with undisguised amazement:

"We've heard of course that your Premier knows a great deal about agriculture, but today we were surprised by what he knows about construction, and not just in a general way but thoroughly."

"Frankly speaking, there's something else that has particularly impressed us," cut in our constant companion, the usually taciturn Press Department official. "I mean Mr. Khrushchov's suggestions about the heat problem. After all, there's no construction problem of the sort in your country. It isn't as hot in Russia as it is in Burma. And here the Premier of the state that has become the most powerful in the world, that has broken through into space and into the heart of the atom, comes to a country thousands of miles away, at the other end of the world, and worries about lowering the temperature in a Burmese student's room. It's amazing!"

Yes, there is assistance and assistance. It is not that some render aid selflessly and generously and others attach all sorts of political or economic strings to it, and that some offer to help on a strictly business basis. Such assistance, it seems, has everything—it is technically sound, the work is done conscientiously. But it lacks heart. You may say, perhaps, that there is no such building material

as heart, that the heart will not reinforce concrete and that you cannot use it as revetment or foundation stone. In that case, don't offer assistance, for the most important investment in any business, and especially in this, is the heart one puts into the job.

Soviet people are internationalists to the core. They want everybody to live well—the little mop-headed Russian boy Zhenya Kairuk and his new friend, the graceful Burmese girl Ma Win Swe.

Khrushchov planted a tender mango sapling outside the Technological Institute. The mango tree grows very fast. A few years hence, perhaps, a young student girl named Ma Win Swe may come there, sit in its shade, open a book and study complex formulas that spell her country's economic prosperity and cultural progress.

May the tree of Soviet-Burmese friendship grow and gain strength!

May the mango bloom!

### **YANGON—END OF STRIFE**

Noon.

Rangoon becomes torpid from the unbearable tropical heat. The city is like a huge screen showing a slow motion picture. It looks as though people have stopped dead where the noon heat struck them.

Men lazily chew betel, the chewing-gum of the East. It draws the mouth, paints it bright red and creates the illusion of coolness. Squatting women, their eyes closed, smoke green cheroots, big as a corn-cob. Compared to them Churchill's famous cigars look like babies. Children devour mangoes.

The impression one gets is that the whole of Rangoon is lost in meditation, just like the orange-garbed monk fingering the beads as he stands before the statue of Buddha in the Sule Pagoda. But that is only on the face of it. One



hears the tinkling of the hundreds of golden and silver bells hung in the Shwedagon Pagoda spire. The pulse is weak, but it beats.

People settled in the fertile Irrawaddy delta on the right bank of the Rangoon River, close to its mouth in the Andaman Sea, many centuries ago. No one remembers what the place was then called, no one knows what happened to it, who destroyed it. All that has remained of it is the lonely Sule Pagoda and the poverty-ridden Dagon fishing village.

In 1755 King Alaungpaya founded a new town here to commemorate the conquest of Lower Burma. It was called Yangon, which means "the end of strife" or "the end of war". But the construction of Yangon coincided with the destruction of Burma. There seemed to be no end to the quarrels among the ambitious feudals, no end to internecine wars, followed by colonial ones. After seizing Yangon, the British renamed it Rangoon—this seemed to suit their Oxford accent more.

The "co-prosperity" brought by the Japanese invaders proved to be another heavy burden for long-suffering Rangoon, while the Anglo-American air raids during the Second World War almost wiped it off the face of the earth. The bamboo huts fell an easy prey to flames. The Rangoon port, the gates of Burma, which accounted for 85 per cent of her imports and exports, was completely destroyed—the wharves and piers were smashed, warehouses razed, access roads dotted with bomb craters.

The Japanese capitulation act was signed aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri*. The war ended, but strife in Rangoon went on. The devastation wrought by air raids caused a widespread housing crisis, which was aggravated by the civil war. The fighting drove peasants to Rangoon. Owing to the constant stream of refugees slums appeared spreading like a cancerous tumour, affecting vast urban areas, spoiling parks and cramming streets.

Here is how the Rangoon of those days is described in

the pamphlet *Nine Months After a Decade of Independence*, published by Ne Win's Government:

"Rangoon became utterly unattractive, the drain pipes were polluted and in bad disrepair. The roads, streets and pavements were in a state defying description. The result was an incredible spread of epidemics, crime and fires. The sewerage system was damaged, refuse-clearing teams and scavengers neglected their duties. The population also contributed to cluttering up the city, accumulating refuse and forming huge pools. Taking advantage of the fact that no one looked after order, people started throwing out slops and garbage everywhere, were not ashamed of washing themselves and their clothes at public hydrants, and even opened fire-plugs when there was no water in the hydrants. The city waterworks system proved absolutely inadequate and there was often no water supply. People themselves were to blame for the lack of water, for they constantly left the hydrants open, and water was thus wasted the whole day through. What made things worse was that stray dogs and cattle roamed the streets, hampering traffic even in the main thoroughfares, and there were beggars, lepers and homeless waifs collecting alms."

Those of us who accompanied Khrushchov on his first visit to Burma in 1955 remember the dismal picture of desolation and decay that was Rangoon, once one of the most beautiful towns in South-East Asia. All the more striking, therefore, were the changes we saw five years later.

Concretely, these changes date back to November 29, 1958, when President U Win Maung issued a decree, and it was so characteristic and vigorous that we should like to quote it.

"Inasmuch as it has come to the knowledge of the President of the Union of Burma that the Rangoon Municipality has not taken the necessary measures, which lawfully come within its competence, to ensure further extension of the sewerage system and installation of drain pipes, the repair, washing and cleaning of the entire sewerage system;



the collection, removal and normal flow of sewage; the removal of refuse and garbage; the sweeping and cleaning of all the streets in the city and destruction of the refuse collected; the drainage of all the anti-sanitary districts of the city; the removal of weeds and the elimination of all the shortcomings preventing the city from being kept clean, etc. . . .

"And inasmuch as the President of the Union has come to the conclusion that the Rangoon Municipality is incapable of performing the functions entrusted to it in accordance with Section 25 of the Municipal Act on Rangoon, the President of the Union, acting in conformity with the powers vested in him by Section 228/1 of the Municipal Act on Rangoon, decrees:

"All the members of the Rangoon Municipality are relieved of their duties as from noon, December 1, 1958."

The functions exercised by the Municipality were relegated to a specially appointed commissioner.

For a time Rangoon again assumed the appearance of a frontline town: army units, supported by bulldozer divisions, attacked the squatters' slums, levelling about 24,000 hovels! The slum-dwellers—one-fourth of the capital's population—were moved into new houses in the outskirts.

"Let's clean up the city ourselves!" This was the slogan with which the inhabitants of Rangoon came out for their weekly sanitation and reconstruction campaigns. The mountains of refuse and the sloppy pools were removed, the streets asphalted, the water-mains repaired. The armed forces carried out an unusual "operation"—they poisoned and otherwise destroyed thousands of stray dogs, which had been a regular scourge.

Taking advantage of a little free time afforded by the Soviet guest's official meetings with the Burmese leaders, we journalists decided to take a fleeting look at Rangoon.

Our bus stopped in Bandoola Square, near the Sule Pa-

goda, in the centre of the capital. The exquisite spiral scrolls of the pagoda contrasted sharply with the massive garden-fronted municipal building. In the middle of the garden, which occupies most of the square, stands a monument to Burma's independence. It is surrounded by five obelisks erected at the points of the rays of an imaginary five-pointed star. This sculptural composition is a sort of copy of the Burmese state flag.

After a moment's hesitation—where to go?—we entered the Sule Pagoda. It is pleasantly calm inside, but this stillness is not at all like the mysterious hush of Hinduistic temples or the oppressive silence of Gothic churches. There were elderly monks and nuns standing before a statue of Buddha, while the young talked in whispers, smoked cheroots or leafed through illustrated magazines. Two merchants were busy negotiating a deal.

The picture was the same at the other pagodas in Burma. Strange though it may seem, the Buddhists who preach "complete renunciation of worldly life" more often than not indulge in the worldliest of pleasures, if one may say so. There are a great many reasons for that and they all stem from the Burmese people's history and customs.

Every Burman must traditionally spend a definite period of time in a monastery. In the past, the minimum was one year; today, it has been reduced to seven days. On entering the monastery, the men don orange robes, the women—pink ones, leaving only their right shoulder bare. Both men and women shave their heads.

Every Burman is free to be a monk and just as free to renounce monkhood. There are many monks in the country—about 200,000—almost one for every hundred "laymen". Orange and pink—the colours of their robes—tint every street scene in Burmese towns. They are constantly before your eyes—in buses, stores, markets, and even cinemas. There is a good reason why orange was chosen. It is seen better from afar, especially against the background of exuberant tropical verdure.



Driving about Rangoon from early morning, we noted that the monks all carried copper bowls on their shoulders.

We obtained a first-hand explanation of this. Seeing that one of the young monks was scrutinising us, we asked him about the bowls.

The monk closed the illustrated magazine he was reading, took a cigar out of his mouth, and said:

"To attain nirvana, the divine state of release from earthly desires, the soul should rise above them. And how can that be when you think of your stomach? We don't cook in the monasteries. As a rule, we only boil water. Our daily bread is the concern of those who remain in the world. They cook rice and vegetables, divide them evenly and put them into the copper bowls you've asked me about...."

As we were leaving the pagoda, we heard a gong. An elderly monk with a glass tray, looked at us appraisingly. There were a number of small coins on the tray.

"Did you notice that the gong first went off when we entered the pagoda, though there were quite a few people before us?" someone in our party asked.

"You were probably taken for Englishmen and politely reminded that debts should be repaid," the young monk said ironically.

He did not smile. Neither did we.

With the passage of time people will achieve "perfect bliss" here on earth, and not in heaven. The path to it will not be the one of which Buddha spoke. But we shall never cease admiring the wonderful skill of Burmese architects and sculptors, who have generously distributed their unique masterpieces throughout the country and adorned it with the gold of pagodas.

But outstanding even amid this profusion of architectural *chefs-d'œuvre* is the Shwedagon Pagoda, truly the eighth wonder of the world.

In hoary antiquity, it was the site of a little fishing village, Dagon, of which we have spoken above. In Sanskrit

this connotes "village of three hills". Chroniclers tell us that in 588 B. C. a small pagoda, only nine metres high, was built on the southernmost of these hills. One generation after another passed the Shwedagon Pagoda on, as a relay baton of their creative genius and imagination. Year after year, century after century, it grew, rose higher and higher into the sky, became more and more beautiful.

Today Shwedagon is a magnificent edifice, its main tower being 100 metres high. Rising 170 metres from its foundation, the pagoda dominates Rangoon. Its golden spire, sparkling in the sun during the day and illuminated with garlands of electric lights at night, is seen from every suburb of the city. Built of bricks in the form of a cone, it is gilded from base to top. The top is crowned by an aureate hti umbrella weighing more than a ton and a seinbu, a golden sphere 25 centimetres in diameter and incrustated with diamonds and other precious gems.

Our car easily negotiated the slope and there we were, at the top of the hill, at the foot of the Shwedagon Pagoda. At the entrance we saw big statues of mythological creatures with a lion's body and a man's head.

There is a long staircase, lined with gilded columns, leading to the pagoda. We counted 166 steps before we got to the main temple. There were long rows of stalls all the way up—the vendors, chiefly women and children, offered the traditional age-old "assortment" of wares—candles, sandal sticks, paper garlands, flowers, souvenirs made of wood and bone, gold foil thin as cigarette paper. Anyone wishing to contribute to the adornment of the pagoda buys gold foil and sticks it over the layers of foil gilding the pagoda's dome from top to bottom.

The observant eye, however, seizes on many signs of our age among the souvenirs—portable radios and models of planes, rockets and even of our Soviet sputniks, souvenirs which have very little to do with Buddhism.



We entered the small inner yard of the temple. There, clustered close together, stood dozens and perhaps hundreds of miniature pagodas. Some were real masterpieces of art, so lovely the woodwork, so exquisite each ornament.

In the pagodas is a whole regiment of statues of Buddha of a variety of sizes and in a variety of poses. People who come to pray here all have their favourite statues which they worship, adorn with flowers, offer incense to and shower with water. We saw many people fill ladles, bowls, watering-pots and other receptacles from a hydrant and then empty them over their favourites. Some of the more enterprising have installed automatic showers over their favourite statues of Buddha. Well, in Rangoon, where the mercury at noon rises to 104°F., a shower is not amiss even for those who have completely retired from and renounced the world.

One of the pagodas was of an ultra-modernistic style, made of glass and aluminium. A lilliput of a skyscraper patterned after a pagoda, it struck a jarring note in this Shwedagon ensemble. The man who paid for this "fashionable" pagoda apparently wanted to keep up with the latest American fashions.

Lastly, what struck us was the difference between the Shwedagon Pagoda of today and the Shwedagon Pagoda described by 19th-century travellers: there are no longer any British cannon on the slopes embodying and protecting what the West had then seized on grounds that "might is right". Everything is back where it should be—precious gems again adorn the spire, while the British guns are rusting on the dust-heap of history.

Barefoot, treading carefully on hot slabs and steps, we left the Shwedagon Pagoda after sticking a few thin sheets of gold on its majestic dome.

There is another pagoda in Rangoon and although it cannot lay claim to antiquity, it nevertheless attracts the attention of tourists. It is the Peace Pagoda, erected a few years ago on U Nu's initiative. Its white dome is

crowned with a golden spire and the words, "For World-Peace" are inscribed on it. The pagoda is added evidence of the Burmese people's devotion to the principle of peaceful coexistence and their love of peace, added proof that the cause of peace is attracting more and more people of diverse creeds. It is not for nothing that at the world peace congresses we invariably see the orange robes of Buddhist monks, the successors of U Ottama and U Wizara, who fought valiantly against the colonialists.

When Khrushchov was first in Burma in 1955 he visited the Peace Pagoda and the near-by artificial Satta Thyngayana Cave. Here is the story of the cave. The sixth Buddhist congress was to have taken place in Rangoon in 1954. Its organisers met with difficulties trying to find appropriate premises for it: there were spacious halls in Rangoon, but not one of them was suitable. Why? Well, the first followers of Buddha held their religious debates and observed their rites in the mountain caves of Ceylon. Since then this has become a set tradition—the Buddhist congresses can only be held in caves. And Rangoon stands on a plain, there are no mountains or rocky caves there.

So it was decided to build a mountain, complete with rocky crests and steep slopes and a cave for the congress. No sooner said than done. The landscape of Rangoon received a new mountain, with an up-to-date 3,000-seat auditorium inside. The Buddha Cave has electric lighting and an excellent ventilation system.

Showing the "cave" to Khrushchov, the Burmese architect who built it said:

"Prime Minister U Nu asked us to impart three features to it—simplicity, restraint and grandeur. We did our best...."

We were back at the Sule Pagoda in Bandoola Square. The noon heat had somewhat relaxed. Rangoon was coming out of its trance, the streets were gradually reviving. The air was filled with the blasts of automobile horns, the warning cries of pedicab drivers, the doleful patter of



merchants offering their wares and, topping the gamut of street noises, the shrill voices of newsboys.

We saw our old friend, the Moskvich. Burma has bought about 1,000 Soviet cars and they are quite popular.

The atmosphere is imbued with a cocktail of aromas—sweetish, emanating from the fruit piled high on stalls; bitterish, exuded by petrol and cigars.

Rangoon's architecture is a motley one. The centre and the main thoroughfares—Sule Pagoda Road and Bandoola Street (former Dalhousie Street)—are dominated by old, Victorian buildings, which once housed British colonial departments, and by big modern structures. Seemingly isolated are the Chinese, Indian and Pakistani quarters with their distinct national features. The closer one comes to the outskirts the fewer stone houses one sees—the dwellings there are made mostly of bamboo. And, finally, one reaches the picturesque suburbs near lakes Kan Daw Gyi and Inya with their beautiful villas surrounded by gardens and oleander and palm groves.

The main official buildings—the President's and the Prime Minister's residences, ministries and embassies—are all grouped round Lake Inya. There, too, are the main buildings of Rangoon University, so far the only university in the country.

Rangoon University is one of the best known in South-East Asia. It has several departments—agricultural, pedagogical, philological, law, technological and biological—and a splendid library. Thirty per cent of the students are women. Incidentally, Burmese women have from time immemorial enjoyed the same rights as men.

Our bus drove slowly through the city streets—through Sule Pagoda Road with its many cinemas and other places of entertainment, Bandoola Street with its seemingly endless rows of stores and shops, Fraser Street with its Indian shops, the downtown Bogyoke Street and Strand Road, and Prome Road with its attractive radio-mast and TV tower.

The car then turned into Insein Road, which leads to the

workers' quarters. This is where Burma's famed handicraftsmen, the Jacks of all trades, live. It was the inhabitants of these quarters who accorded the warmest welcome to Khrushchov, head of the Government of the first workers' and peasants' state.

All round were blooming gardens, banana trees bending under the weight of their fruit, palms proudly waving their green fans; the air was filled with the intoxicating fragrance of the magnolia; the shade of the acacia beckoned. But the houses had no stone foundation, they were built on piles. And could one really call them houses? It is probably houses like these that Pushkin had in mind when he wrote:

*There stands a hut on chicken legs,  
Without either doors or windows.*

Indeed, they had no windows and no doors. Just apertures. Under their floors cattle grazed lazily. Children played near the wells. The bigger ones played *chinlon*, or Burmese football. Standing in a circle, they kicked, headed, or, as a last resort, shouldered a light, hollow ball made of thin bamboo or cane twigs to each other. Touching it with hands was against the rules. The boy who lets the ball touch the ground was out.

Meanwhile, women beat soap-soaked clothes on the road stones, while washing machines stood idle in the show windows of the big stores, out of the buyer's reach owing to excessively high prices. When done with the laundry, the women climbed into tubs of water in their *tamein* skirts, raised them chin-high and washed them, and themselves, without undressing. All one could see popping out of the tubs were the women's head-dresses, bunched like horse-tails or dressed like miniature flower-bedecked pagodas.

People in the Rangoon outskirts are the first to go to bed and the first to rise. The din of night life does not reach



here—they do not hear the horns of streamlined American cars, the cries of newsboys selling evening papers, the blaring sounds of jazz bands. But, then, when the centre of the city still slumbers, the outskirts buzz with life. The workers hasten to their jobs, jumping on the run into buses, which are the main mode of travel in Rangoon, their routes designated by pictures, not numbers. For instance, the bus with the image of a horse goes to Insein and the one with a plane to Mingaladon Airport.

The bus with the picture of a ship takes you to the harbour, where you can see big ocean-going vessels from all over the world, flying the flags of many nations, including that of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The port is capable of handling about 2,000,000 tons of cargo a year.

The workshops start another day. The bigger ones greet it with the rumble of roll-up shutters, the smaller ones with the creaking of wooden doors and folds. Burmese artisans are famed far and wide. Skilful cutters of precious stones—blue sapphires and red rubies, wood- and ivory-carvers, silversmiths, potters, decorators, weavers and spinners toil from early morning until late at night, receiving coppers for the gold of their labour.

The umbrella and tobacco factories are especially numerous. The demand for umbrellas, parasols and cigars is extremely high in Burma.

The workers sit on mats on the floor. Sometimes you see a whole family at work—father polishing handles, mother stretching and printing cloth, their son making the frame. Year in, year out the same worker performs the same operation, eventually becoming a real virtuoso.

As for tobacco factories, there are more than 200 of them in Rangoon alone, and about 500 in the country. More often than not, a factory is a two- and three-man affair producing the famous cheroots made of a mixture of tobacco and crumbs of special soft wood, rolled in green tree leaves. . . .

Such was the Rangoon we saw through the "window" between functions on the official programme—the "window" of the dust-covered bus which, by local custom, could be adorned with the picture of a typewriter.

The last time we saw Rangoon at night—and this time it was really a fleeting glimpse—was between the receptions in the Presidential Palace and the Soviet Embassy.

When the candles are out all cats are gray, they say. When the city lights are switched on and the offices are plunged in darkness, with only neon advertisements illuminating the buildings, try to guess what country you are in. The ads urge you to buy Chesterfield and Camel cigarettes. Does that mean you are in the U.S.A.? They urge you to buy Philips electric razors and radios. Does that mean you are in Holland? They boost Siemens electrical appliances and refrigerators. Is it West Germany?

But the ordinary resident of Rangoon smokes cheroots and not Camels; he does not use the Philips razor, and gets his shave from a barber squatting on the pavement; at his home you will rather hear the mellifluous saung, the Burmese harp, than the polished radio; Siemens electrical appliances are out of his reach and he gets along with a kerosene lamp. To cool himself he chews betel instead of sucking ice cubes from the refrigerator.

In the evening, the Rangoon market does not resemble a Middle East bazaar. The vendors are not barkers. They sit still and silent. They look as though they have long given up as useless any attempt to get buyers for their wares. Rarely does a vendor liven up for a moment, rarely do his eyes light up with anticipation. This happens when a European appears in the narrow passageway between the little shops, bamboo stalls, handcarts and wooden crates. Only for a moment, for the vendor knows well enough that the camera-armed European comes for one thing only—for the exotic—and that the money spent on that goes not to him who makes his living at the market, but to



the rich tourist firms. And this is something that the Rangoon market and the bazaars of Beirut and Baghdad, Calcutta and Cairo, have in common.

The human stream flows slowly amidst the market stalls. People captiously look the goods over, bargain none too enthusiastically and . . . walk off without buying anything. Seeing that one wonders how these vendors and their colleagues in other Eastern towns make a living. Do they really succeed in making any kyats, rupees or bhats?

The answer was supplied, in a way, by a scene we witnessed. A shopkeeper left his shop and walked down to the street barber. After the shave, he and the barber went for a snack to a near-by eating-house and swallowed food brought by a hawker in paper bags. After that the barber and the owner of the eating-house went to the shopkeeper, the former for soap and the latter for coffee, sugar and tea. The thing repeats itself day in and day out—the shopkeeper goes for a shave to the barber, the barber goes to the shoemaker to repair his sandals, the shoemaker borrows matches and nails from the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper, barber and shoemaker drink coffee at the eating-house, and so on and so forth.

In the meantime, the cinemas in Sule Pagoda Road and Bogyoke Street are all ablaze with neon advertisements. The New Excelsior shows *Europe at Night* and *Tokyo After Dark*, the Globe—*The Nights of the Borgias*, the New Palladium—*The Women's Mart*, the Carlton—*The Island in Flames*, the Royal—*Victory at Sea*, the President—*The Naked and the Dead*. Noble super-sleuths armed with super-guns shoot super-gangsters and rescue professional super-beauties. Close-ups show kisses, faces distorted by death agony, fingers feverishly gripping gun handles. Gunfire, blood, war. . . .

Yangon—the end of strife, Rangoon—the end of war. No, all that is still far away. Civil war is still raging in the forests and mountains, war is going on behind the walls of foreign banks and firms in Bogyoke Street and

Strand Road, war is being planned behind the curtained windows of SEATO headquarters.

And yet some sixth sense tells the observant and well-wishing man visiting Rangoon in the spring of 1960 that all this will come to an end. Sooner or later. Better soon than late, the Burmese say. And that is not the brand of thoughtless optimism, once shown by King Alaungpaya; it is something more. It is a people's confidence in the triumph of its just cause, in the triumph of freedom, social justice and peace.

### **TUATOME, BURMA!**

In the afternoon Premier Khrushchov again met Prime Minister Ne Win. The long, friendly talk between them was attended by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. After that the head of the Soviet Government received a visit from U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyain, prominent Burmese political figures and leaders of the "Stable" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

Recalling the meeting later, Khrushchov said:

"In Rangoon I received a visit from U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyain. They are leaders of the opposition which was defeated at the general election. Both today's winners of the election and the defeated, that is, both U Nu and U Ba Swe, were very kind to us when we visited Burma in 1955. That is why, having come again to Rangoon immediately after the election, the best I could do as a guest was to congratulate the winners and express my sympathy to the defeated. That is what I actually did—I congratulated U Nu on his victory and expressed my sympathy to U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyain. . . ."

U Nu called on the head of the Soviet Government as the winner in the election, while U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyain came discouraged by the way it had turned out.

After expressing his sympathy, Khrushchov said that



though he had expected U Nu's party to win, he had never thought the victory would be so impressive.

"The issue was decided in his favour by the monks," U Kyaw Nyain replied gloomily.

"The monks may have had something to do with it, but not entirely, it seems," Khrushchov remarked. "U Nu probably found some weak spots in your position."

"Come here four years from now and you will find us back in power," U Kyaw Nyain said confidently.

"We shall live and see," the Soviet Premier said, and the talk turned to other subjects.



The Presidential Palace and the huge park surrounding it were festively illuminated. President U Win Maung was giving a big civic reception in honour of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.

It was held in the open, on a lawn the size of a football field, if not bigger. The lawn was lined with quaint giant trees garlanded with multi-coloured lamps, a traditional place for receptions, for always many people are invited to them.

Among the guests are members of the Burmese Government, representatives of the business community, public personalities, diplomats, cultural workers, prominent artists, writers and journalists. Khrushchov appeared with President U Win Maung. As they passed from group to group, the President presented the Burmese Ministers and the ambassadors accredited in Rangoon to the Soviet Premier. Whenever Khrushchov joined a group there ensued a lively conversation.

At one point he was surrounded by a large group of Burmese and foreign correspondents. One of them asked how Burma had impressed him and what changes he had noticed since his first visit in 1955.

"This time, unfortunately, I have not had an opportunity to see Rangoon properly, to say nothing of the country

as a whole," replied Khrushchov. "But in my opinion Rangoon has changed for the better—there are new buildings now, the streets are cleaner. And people seem to be better dressed.

"I was favourably impressed today by the progress at the construction site of the Technological Institute. Burma needs such educational establishments. The institute will train qualified specialists and, being an economically underdeveloped country, Burma needs them badly."

Turning to the Burmese journalists, Khrushchov said:

"You must have your own specialists. That is most important for economic progress. Exhortations and hand-outs from abroad won't get you anywhere. It is necessary to build up the national economy and create an industry of your own."

His words were clearly approved by the Burmese journalists, who noted down everything the Soviet Premier said.

Khrushchov was then asked about his meetings with General Ne Win. He replied that he had two lengthy talks with him in the two days on issues of interest to Burma and the Soviet Union.

"I am satisfied with the talks and the frank exchange of opinions we had," Khrushchov said.

The number of questions posed to him increased in geometric proportion, and the reception threatened to grow into a drawn-out press conference. Prime Minister Ne Win approached the Soviet Premier.

"If you answer all these questions, Mr. Khrushchov," he says, "you will miss the fragrant tea."

The impromptu press conference ended amidst an outburst of laughter.

The cordial hosts, it seemed, had done their utmost to acquaint their Soviet guests with every national dish. There was the favourite Burmese delicacy—a tasty dish of rice boiled in fish broth and spiced with aromatic roots; curry rice with garlic, curcuma and other spices; and rice with fish and shrimp sauce.



There was no meat or wine—the Buddhist religion discourages their use. In May 1960 the U Nu Government decided to discontinue state production of alcoholic beverages as “sinful” and to sell the distilleries to private firms. It is also an interesting fact that the first decision taken by U Nu, two hours after his return to power, was to prohibit the slaughter of cattle.

Dusk fell rapidly over the city. The first stars appeared in the sky, the footlights of the open-air stage at the presidential park were switched on. Khrushchov, U Wing Maung and Ne Win took their seats in the front row. The other guests occupied their places.

The concert began.

To the left of the platform was an ordinary European-type orchestra, to the right—one of national instruments. While the first played a march by way of an overture, let us tell you about the second.

The soul of the Burmese national orchestra is, of course, the saung. This ancient instrument is very much like a harp. Its sounding board is shaped like a boat and has a curved neck. The musician runs his fingers carefully over the fourteen silk strings, causing them to emit silvery, slightly tremulous sounds.

The *saing-waing* and the *kyi-waing* are something quite different. The former is a ring of drums. The musician sits in the middle of a fretted circular barrier with twenty-two drums suspended, in the order of the notes, on the inside. Turning like a squirrel in a cage, he drums with both hands. His expressionless face contrasts sharply with the feverish tattoo. The *kyi-waing* is like the *saing-waing*, only with gongs instead of drums.

We have told you earlier about bamboo and its amazing all-round uses. The Burmese orchestra cannot get along without it either. Take the xylophonist skilfully manipulating the little hammers. The Burmese xylophone is called *pattala* and its twenty-four bars are made of bamboo.

The curtain parted to reveal a girl swathed in white. She bowed to the audience and began to sing—of flowers, of her love of flowers, of how this love enabled her to hear them grow and bloom. She danced. At first one feared she would trip over her clothes. But this fear was groundless. Dexterously and gracefully, the girl threw back the flaps of her tunic and created the illusion of a butterfly fluttering from flower to flower. The rhythm of the dance grew faster. The *saing-waing* and *kyi-waing* musicians barely kept up with it as they beat the twenty-two drums and the twenty-two gongs. And then, just as the whirl reached its pinnacle, the butterfly unexpectedly folded its wings and sank exhausted to the floor.

The skill of Burmese danseuses is really marvellous. Their traditions and fame date back to times immemorial. Chroniclers tell us that early in the 9th century Burmese artists performed in Sian, the ancient Chinese capital, and captivated it by their skill. Enraptured and stunned by their artistry, Po Chu-i, the greatest of poets in the T'ang Dynasty, dedicated a poem to them:

*The sound of the jade shell causes the artistes' hair to  
sway,  
The beat of the copper drum moves their painted  
bodies,  
The pearl necklaces sparkle and twinkle like the stars  
in the sky,  
The garlands of flowers whirl and twist like dragons  
and snakes.*

Burmese art felt the iron heel of the British colonialists. They tried to corrupt and uproot it. Pumping fabulous profits out of the country, they refused to spend a single kyat on national music and literature, theatre and cinema. Here is an example. The Burmese puppet theatre is more than 1,000 years old. Some eighty years ago there were 350 puppet troupes in Mandalay. And how many of them are there



now? Only six. The British art lovers did not care for them. They preferred to spend their pounds on another kind of puppets, and as a result many a wonderful Burmese butterfly dancer perished in the flames of war.

That is why the anti-colonial, anti-war theme is so prominent in Burmese art. That is why Burmese cultural workers acclaimed the news of Khrushchov's visit to their country.

"I warmly welcome Khrushchov's visit to Burma," said poet Daun Nue Swe. "We Burmese see in him a guardian of peace whose appeal for total disarmament has captivated the world. He is constantly urging the Western countries to end the perilous arms race."

Actress Dagon Khin told us:

"I regard Khrushchov's visit to Burma as a manifestation of friendship. Art and cultural exchange are concomitants of friendship and peace. We artists welcome closer friendship between our nations. We are happy to play host to an outstanding peace champion like Khrushchov."

Composer Sein Mya Maung spoke of the same thing.

"We do not want anything to darken the sky over the world," he said. "War does not augur any good to anyone. We know it from the bitter experiences of the Second World War. The flames of war kill man's creative energy, destroy the works of his hands and brain. I want to write music. Like all other toilers, I need peace. That is why we acclaimed Soviet Premier Khrushchov's proposals for complete disarmament. We are grateful to him for this peaceful step. There are many nations on earth. They speak different languages. But there is one language common to all—the language of music. It is understood by everyone. So it is in politics. There are many ideas. Often people of certain convictions do not understand others. But here too there is a common language—the language of peaceful coexistence. It is this language, known to all, that Premier Khrushchov speaks."

Meanwhile the concert continued. Burma's best songstresses, danseuses and screen actresses succeeded one another on the stage. They sang of peaceful labour and joyous love, of beautiful flowers and the cloudless sky.

\* \* \*

In the evening we found ourselves back on Soviet territory, if only for a short while—at the reception given in honour of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. at the Soviet Embassy. Among the guests gathered in the Embassy garden were prominent Burmese politicians, public figures and businessmen, members of the diplomatic corps, and Soviet and foreign journalists.

Khrushchov and U Win Maung, who arrived together from the Presidential Palace, took their places at the main table. With them were the Burmese President's wife, Prime Minister Ne Win and his wife, members of Khrushchov's party, and Burmese ministers.

On the right side of the big table sat a venerable old man with a gray drooping moustache and sharp, youngish brown eyes. It was obvious that those present respected him highly. He was dressed in a bright orange jacket and a checked Burmese skirt. Pinned on the jacket was an International Peace Prize medal. The man was Thakin Kodaw Hmaing—the Seyagyi (Great Teacher), as the Burmans call him.

Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, whose real name is Maung Lun, is one of Burma's greatest writers and public personalities. He has dedicated his whole life to his dearly beloved country. He has witnessed a whole epoch of her struggle, from the darkest days of defeat to the great and happy day when she proclaimed her independence.

He was born on the fourteenth day of tabaung in the year 1237 of the Burmese era, that is, in March 1875. The years of his childhood and youth were the years in which the British colonialists were eradicating the last vestiges



of Burmese liberty and imposing, for the centuries to come it seemed, a disgraceful colonial regime on the country.

Kodaw Hmaing was one of those who kept the flames of hope burning in Burmese hearts in the grim years of slavery. The author of dozens of plays, novels, poems and newspaper articles, he propagated the national traditions of Burmese culture, glorified the heroic past of the Burmese people, ridiculed the servitors of the colonialists.

The *New Times of Burma* wrote that it was he who awakened the Burmans' self-consciousness and patriotism with his mighty pen.

When a new wave of the national-liberation movement swept Burma and the sun of freedom was rising on the horizon, Kodaw Hmaing stood in the van of the struggle for independence. Along with Aung San, U Nu and others, he organised and led the patriotic Thakin movement which unfolded in the 1930s, and fought on stubbornly until the proclamation of Burma's independence.

The Burmese people's struggle for peace and international friendship is closely associated with Thakin Kodaw Hmaing's name. Despite his advanced years, he still writes and still actively opposes war preparations. In 1953 he took part in the World Peace Council session in Budapest and later visited the Soviet Union. He was awarded the International Prize for the Promotion of Peace Among Nations in 1955.

And now this oldest and most respected author of Burma sits a few steps from us.

"I have outlived four English sovereigns, starting with Queen Victoria," he says. "I want to live to see a stable peace in the world and then visit Moscow again.

"You must open a school of your own here," he continued after a pause, "and teach our children to strengthen friendship with the Soviet Union. Governments do not always understand each other, but children and youths always find a common language."

The Seyagyi approached Premier Khrushchov and greeted him with the words:

"I shall live until a lasting peace is established. I am sure you will achieve it."

"We shall do our best," Khrushchov replied and warmly shook his hand.

"I wish you success in this," said Thakin Kodaw Hmaing.

"Thank you. We shall share it. My success will be yours and yours will be mine."

The reception neared its end. The Soviet Premier rose from the table, holding a bright metal sphere in his hands, and addressed U Win Maung:

"In token of our respect for you, I should like to present you with a replica of the pennant delivered to the moon. The original is on the moon and now you will have its replica. . . . As you may see, the pennant is divided into sections. When it hit the moon, it broke up into these sections. So when a man gets to the moon he may find parts of the pennant—plates with the arms of the Soviet Union engraved on them. These commemorative bands are enclosed in metal capsules, which are also on the moon now. And when you get to the moon, you may find parts of them."

These words were greeted in the garden with laughter and stormy applause.

"The value of this present," a Burman standing close to us said in English, "lies in the fact that Mr. Khrushchov is the only statesman in the world from whom it can be received."

"I shall fly with you," the President joked.

"It will be a pleasure," Khrushchov replied. "In the past people used to say: 'I am ready to go with you to the ends of the earth.' Now we can say: 'With you I am ready to go even to the moon.'"

"Well, if we are to fly," he continued, turning to General Ne Win, "how about you, Mr. Prime Minister? It will



be merrier if there are three of us. Allow me, as a token of my esteem, to present you with a pennant too."

The Soviet Premier presented General Ne Win with a replica of the pennant amidst applause.

The General thanked him warmly for the gift and jokingly declared:

"Well, if I find there is too much trouble for me on earth, I shall swallow this sphere and go to the moon."

"Mr. Khrushchov," the Prime Minister's wife cut in, "maybe there will be another place in your lunik? I don't want my husband to leave me alone with the children."

"There will be," the Soviet Premier replied, "although we are getting to be quite a company. But, the more the merrier, as the saying goes."

The Rangoon moon shone high up in the sky.

\* \* \*

The Soviet Premier's visit to Burma ushered in a new phase in Soviet-Burmese relations. The results of the visit were recorded in a Joint Soviet-Burmese Communiqué. The exchange of opinions between Khrushchov and the Burmese Prime Minister showed that relations between the two countries were developing on the principles of peaceful coexistence and friendly co-operation.

The Prime Minister of Burma reaffirmed his country's allegiance to the policy of neutrality and non-alignment. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. declared that the political course of the Union of Burma, a course contributing positively to the maintenance of universal peace, was respected in the Soviet Union.

The heads of Government of the two countries said they considered "general disarmament the most important problem facing the world today, since its solution will not only eliminate the danger of a universal war fraught with grave consequences for humanity, but will also make it possible to use the invaluable resources now being expended on armaments for solving the cardinal problem of rais-

ing the living standards of the peoples throughout the world, especially the peoples of the economically underdeveloped countries”.

The Communiqué noted that Premier Khrushchov's proposal for general and complete disarmament had aroused world-wide interest. The two statesmen agreed that the proposal deserved to be considered most carefully at disarmament negotiations. On behalf of his country, the Burmese Prime Minister welcomed the recent reduction of the armed forces in the Soviet Union. Lastly, the Communiqué expressed the hope that the Great Powers possessing nuclear weapons would in the near future reach agreement on the complete discontinuance of nuclear-weapon tests under effective international supervision and control. It called on all these powers, as well as on other countries, to refrain of their own free will from testing atomic and hydrogen weapons.

The Communiqué concluded as follows: “The present visit of N. S. Khrushchov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., is a valuable contribution to the strengthening of friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries and hence to the strengthening of international co-operation and mutual understanding. The heads of Government of the two countries confirmed their determination to consolidate and further promote the existing friendship and co-operation between the two countries.”

An exchange of opinions on the promotion of broader cultural and scientific co-operation was held at the Burmese Foreign Ministry. Cultural ties between the two countries have been developing successfully in recent years. Burma has been visited by a group of Uzbek artistes, variety and circus companies, the Bashkirian Folk Dance Ensemble, by numerous delegations of educationalists and scientists. The Rangoon and Leningrad universities have exchanged professors. A number of delegations of Burmese cultural workers—writers and film makers—have visited the So-



viet Union. A group of Burmese artists performed with great success in Moscow and other Soviet cities. The Burmese film, *The Flower of Love*, had its Moscow première in 1959, and scored a hit.

There are, however, ample possibilities and prospects for broadening Soviet-Burmese cultural ties. Of vast importance in this respect is the agreement concerning the early conclusion of a Soviet-Burmese cultural pact and the elaboration of a mutually acceptable programme of cultural and scientific exchange.

\* \* \*

At 7.57 a.m. Rangoon time on February 18, the plane carrying Premier Khrushchov took off from Mingaladon Airfield for Jakarta, the Indonesian capital.

Reporting to the nation on his trip to South-East Asian countries, Khrushchov said:

"We left Rangoon feeling really satisfied, for we had seen once again that Soviet-Burmese relations are on the right track. We approach the fundamental issues of the struggle for peace and against colonialism in a common spirit. Our aims coincide."

Our fast-winged, red-starred liner soared into the sky. The morning over Burma was sunny and cloudless. The plane rose higher and higher, and under its wings the country again assumed the features of a relief map. The hand of the altimeter moved faster, the relief map soon turned into a little rhombus and then disappeared completely.

In the salon, Premier Khrushchov dictated a telegram to President U Win Maung and Prime Minister Ne Win. A few minutes later the radio operator transmitted the following message:

"On leaving your hospitable country we very fondly recall our cordial meetings with you and other prominent statesmen and political leaders of friendly Burma, the meet-

ings with the industrious and heroic Burmese people. I am sure our meetings and useful talks will serve further to strengthen the friendship between our countries and the cause of peace throughout the world. I wish you success in your work aimed at consolidating the freedom and independence of your wonderful country; I also wish happiness and prosperity to the people of the Union of Burma."

*Tuatome*, Burma!

*Tuatome*, 85-year-old sage Thakin Kodaw Hmaing and five-year-old Ma Win Swe; *tuatome*, 1,000-year-old Shwedagon Pagoda and the new-born Technological Institute in Rangoon; *tuatome*, ancient people, whose new life is just beginning!

*Tuatome*! Farewell!

РАЗБУЖЕННЫЙ ВОСТОК

КНИГА ПЕРВАЯ



Burmese welcome the man who has come with a clear and open heart



Rangoon's Mingaladon Airport. The distinguished Soviet guest is met by President U Win Maung, Prime Minister Ne Win, members of the Burmese Government, public personalities and the diplomatic corps









At the Soviet Embassy reception. Khrushchov presents U Win Myung with a replica of the pennant delivered to the moon by a Soviet rocket



Khrushchov visits the construction site of the Technological Institute, built in Rangoon under the supervision of Soviet engineers





Premier Khrushchov plants a mango sapling in front of the main building of the Technological Institute. The tree grows very quickly, but not as quickly as the institute buildings



Khrushchov chats with U Nu, leader of the "Clear" Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, and now the Prime Minister, whom he received at his residence





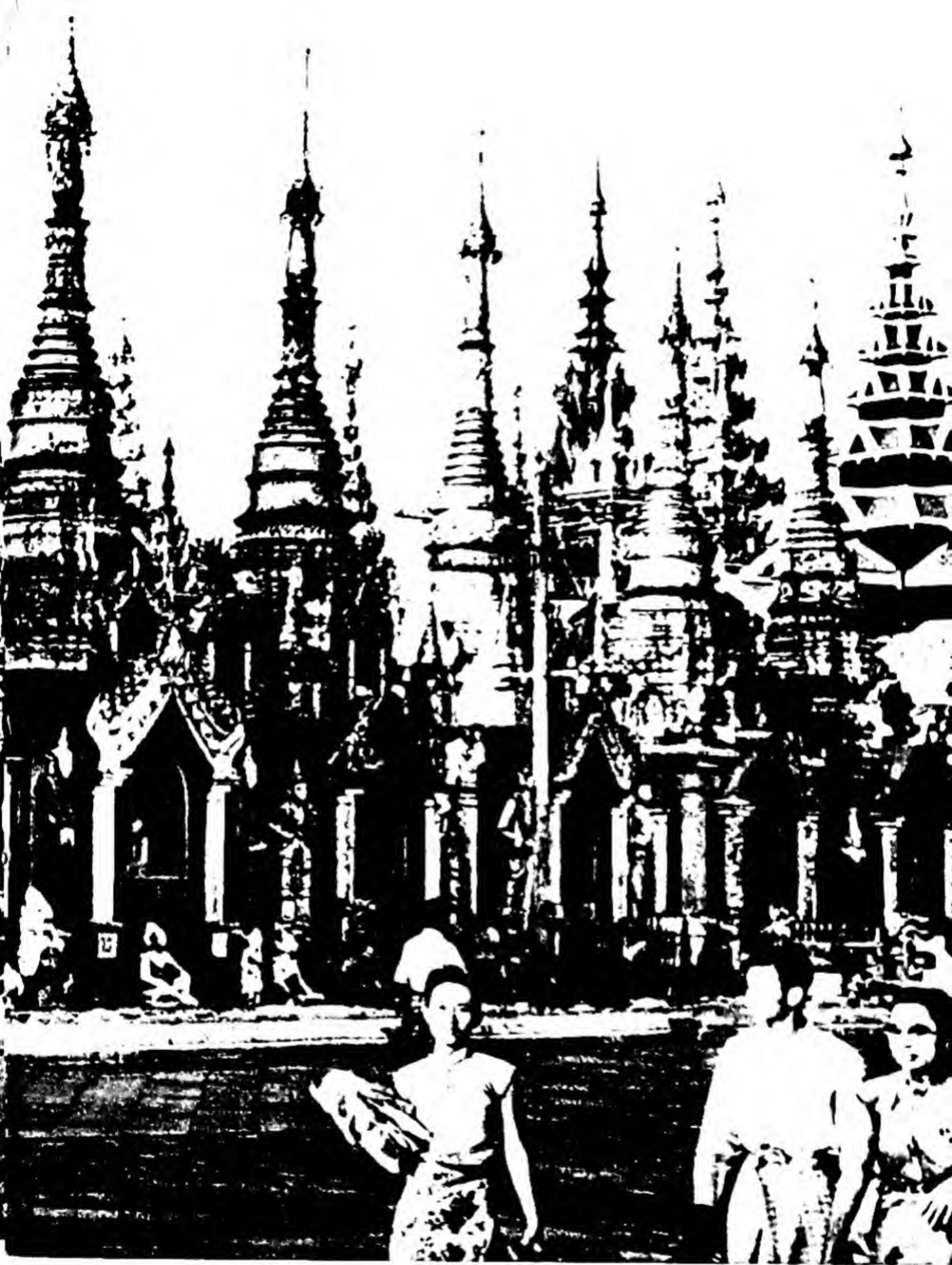






Kipling was wrong when he said the Burmese were "inferior" around Shwedagon? It would be more correct to apply to the spires of the world-famous Shwedagon Pagoda!





Who was it that created these exquisite pagodas  
word to the colonialists who peeled the gold off





The Presidential Palace is festively illuminated for the reception given by U Win Maung in honour of the Soviet Premier.



A stone guardian at the Shwedagon Pagoda

A Burmese landscape



At the reception given by the President, N. S. Khrushchov, U Win Maung and General Ne Win chat cordially "over a cup of tea"



Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, the Grand Old Man, is deeply moved  
At the Soviet Embassy reception in Rangoon, Khrushchov wishes  
him luck, good health and further success in his work and strug-  
gle for peace





The Soviet Premier inspects the almost completed Inya Hotel—  
yet another token of Soviet assistance to the Burmese people





